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# Early Days at Uppingham under Edward Thring

c Rawnsley, Willingham Franklin

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By

An Old Boy

London

Macmillan and Co., Limited

New York: The Macmillan Company

1904

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# CHAPTER I

## MY FIRST HALF

How well I remember the getting ready to leave home to go to school for the first time. The Bible given me the day before by my father; the packing of portmanteau and hamper; I smell the cake now and the hay which was stuffed round the pots of jam, and see the wrinkled apples and the double walnuts; then, on the morning, before breakfast, the farewell visit to the pony and the rabbit-house, and the breakfast one was almost too excited to touch; and then the last words from mother and sisters, and we were off, my father and I and the old coachman, for a five-mile drive to the station.

Of the journey I can recall nothing till we got to Rugby, where my father used to go to school in the old coaching days; and there at the book-stall he bought me a *Milton*, a little

thick duodecimo volume in red cloth, which has never left me, and still stands on my shelf along with *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake*, which were my early holiday task books, and the twelve-volume pocket edition of Knight's *Shakespeare*, which was added as soon as I had a study of my own. Ah! what a boon that was to a shy boy, or, indeed, to any new boy, shy or not, that having a place of one's own which no other had the right to enter without your leave. This was one of Edward Thring's first gifts to school-boys. 'An Englishman's house,' he would say, 'is his castle; and every boy's study is his castle, small but his very own, which he may hold against all comers, and no one shall invade his privacy.'

Still, for my first half, as the school had begun to outgrow its buildings, I had to share with three others a room in the Head-Master's house looking out on his garden.

It was afterwards often used as a sick-room. Two of my three study companions were senior boys, who were always good-natured, but the third was of my own age. He had been a term-and-a-half already at School, and knew so many things of which I was utterly ignorant, that he was a sort of guardian angel to me.

We became the closest friends, 'Bunny' and I (we all had nick-names), and many a happy day did I spend at various times during the next twelve or thirteen years in the bosom of his family.

I have said he was senior to me by a term-and-a-half; and half-a-term in those days meant nine weeks; for we had only two halves then, each eighteen or nineteen weeks long, and holidays of seven weeks at Midsummer and Christmas. New boys came at the mid-half in April and October, as well as in February and August. A week was given us at Easter according to statute, but not all the boys went away for that, and three days at Michaelmas, when very few went; but these short holidays were very welcome breaks both to boys and masters in the long, long halves, and were, I think, more enjoyed than those at Midsummer and Christmas, if that were possible. I used to go at Easter to my Grand-parents, whose home was nearer than my own; and the joy of riding to the meet on the Rectory pony, and following as long as his wind lasted, was something not to be forgotten, for we never saw hounds at home.

At Michaelmas 'Bunny' and I went together to a house only three miles from Uppingham.

The postman's cart brought our bags, and we walked. We started directly after breakfast, and went partly by road, and partly by the fields, where stood the big 'Rutland Oak,' and across which the great Leicester sheep made dark tracks as they brushed away the dew, happy if we had not crept up and caught one by the fleece, and made him carry us on his broad back at a gallop for a little way over the ridge and furrow. The fear of the farmer or his man kept these rides short.

Those Michaelmas visits gave me a peep of two things which were then on the eve of finally disappearing, and are now gone for ever. One of these was the three o'clock dinner which our good host and hostess, both old people, kept up to the end of their lives, followed by tea at six and supper at nine. We began with breakfast at 8.30, and were kept from starving by cake, apples, and ginger wine at eleven.

The other perished custom was only to be witnessed on a Sunday. It was the performance in the 'Loft' of the church of the Sunday music. The postman and the shoemaker and another, who was, I think, the Rectory coachman, played a flute, a fiddle, and a bass viol. There was a little necessary tuning-up before

service began, and, when the hymn was given out, it was always a familiar tune which was set, and the performance was hearty and, as I thought at the time, very creditable. I was not there often enough to have heard any break-downs, or such amusing incidents as not unfrequently did take place, when the leader was deaf or obstinate, or the performers got out of hand.

It was in a Hampshire church, where the band was partly in the gallery and partly below, that a head was once thrust up in the middle of a hymn with, 'Yeu be wrong up there,' to which the rejoinder was a rap on the head with a fiddle-bow and a loud, 'Don't yeu tell I.'

But I have run right away from my subject, which was my first arrival at school. After leaving Rugby we reached Seaton Station, and there the Head Master himself, with his dog 'Queer,' one of the old sheep-dog breed, and swinging in his hand a short stick with a white crutch handle—I knew it well, many years afterwards he made me a present of it—had come to meet his old friend my father, who had made the promise a few years before, 'Well, if you get a school I will send my boy to you.'

We walked up those three miles of hilly road,

getting the well-known view of the church spire and little else, then through the little town with its coarsely-cobbled side-walks, which made the mud in the roadway preferable, and so by the School lane to the somewhat forbidding gateway, and in by the humble entrance to the School House. Both the side door at the gateway and the front door of the house were furnished with large triangular handles or drops, which just reached down to a big octagonal stud below, and thus served both as handles and knockers.

I remember nothing of how the Head-Master's part of the house struck me; my whole attention was fixed on the boys' part, and what was going to happen to me there. But to know this I had to wait till next day. About half-past nine the matron took me up to the dormitory, showed me my 'partition,' told me to be quick into bed, and not forget my prayers, and not to get up to first school, but to stay till she came to me in the morning; then she drew the red chintz curtain at the foot of my bed and left me. Soon two small boys came up and peeped in at me, but said nothing, then the School House bell rang for some minutes, and with the noise of many feet the house came

pouring up to the dormitories, and soon my room (it was one of the biggest, having eight partitions in it) was filled with talk and movement. 'Hulloa, youngster! What's your name?' 'How old are you?' 'Been to school before?' The questions were welcome, as it seemed to be introducing me into the school, and I was beginning to be, what I had so long wished, a Public Schoolboy. I had met at the Christmas parties and dances at home, boys from a well-known private school, and I used to think them immensely my superiors; but what airs they used to give themselves! The Public Schoolboys whom I had seen were quiet and hum-drum beside them, but they were the real thing. I had never been to a private school, and was only ten years old, and small for my age; but here I was now going to be a Public Schoolboy; something to be proud of when I got home for the holidays. I did not think I should ever feel small again.

Punctually at a quarter-past ten a step was heard along the passage, which stopped and entered room after room, and with 'Good-night to you,' answered by a chorus of 'Good-night, sir,' turned out the gas and was gone. This was the Head Master. Talking followed,

till some bigger boy said, 'Good-night, you fellows, I'm going to sleep,' and soon all followed his example, and we knew no more till the six o'clock bell awoke us the next morning. It was an April morning, and light enough by six at that time of the year and onwards till the Midsummer holidays, which in those days really were at Midsummer, and the name still lingers though the holidays are in August and September. This is one of the many instances which attest how much history there is in a name. Think of *the Strand* in London, and *Horseferry Street*, Westminster: what do these names not recall of the unconfined margin of the wide-spreading Thames, with its one solitary bridge, and only a ferry to take the Archbishop from Westminster Hall to Lambeth, through all those first eight centuries of London's existence? Even in remote and quiet country places you may find history surviving in a name, as I once did when out with the hounds in Lincolnshire, coming to a muddy lane among the fields and hearing that it was called 'Slash Lane,' the sole local memorial of the battle of Winceby.

But to return to the School bell; it rang loud and long, and we all heard it, but there was no thought of turning out yet. At 6.30 it rang

again, and the man with the boots appeared. Some boys began to get up, always the same boys, others never dreamt of turning out till 'it went the quarter.' After that, things moved briskly for ten or twelve minutes. At 6.55 the last bell began, and went on for three minutes, while the stream of hurrying feet went through the long passage, down the staircase, out across the 'Quad,' and then down the long lane to the steps in the old Churchyard a hundred yards away.

The steps were one straight flight then, the treads much worn, but being straight one could take them at a rush; and there was a useful iron hand-rail at one side worn bright like the Roman figures of the Gods, 'Mane salutantum tactu,' as each boy helped to lug himself up three steps at a time in his struggle to arrive before the last note of the striking hour. But there was still the churchyard path by the old lime trees to be traversed before the door of the old Schoolroom, co-eval with the founding of the School, came into view. There the præpostor of the week was standing, perhaps watch in hand to compare it with the church clock, and waiting for the last stroke of seven. He was generally good-natured, and so stood

a few yards from the door to look down the path and wave on any laggard who might be in sight. But what a rush it was! Sometimes the quarters began to strike when a boy was still in the 'Quad,' and chased the flying wretch all down the stone-paved slope to the Churchyard, and the hour was striking as he flew up the steps, and, breathless with his haste, raised an agonised cry to let the præpostor, who by this time was at the door, and could not see him, know that he was almost there; and then with laces loose and flying hair, and books, and 'mortarboard,' clutched in a fierce embrace, he generally just got in. But there were times when he reached those narrow double doors of dark oak, only to see them shut in his face. After all his exertion that was a heart-breaking thing; happy for him if it were not raining or snowing as he hung over the low wall and looked into the beast-market, recovering his wind and thinking of the inevitable punishment which would come to him when a quarter of an hour later, after prayers and call over, the door was opened to let him in.

In the light months of the year boys were not often late; but in the dark cold mornings

of winter, when we had to dress by gas-light, bed 'pulled' harder, and the struggle was great.

I have little to say of these first days at school. As I had never been to a preparatory school all was new to me, and for the first fortnight I was exceedingly miserable. One boy especially made my life a burden to me, and never could let me alone, till at last a fight between us was arranged—fights were constantly 'arranged' in those days—and after second school we met just in the quiet corner of the 'Quad,' near the Gymnasium door, and though I knew nothing of the art, indignation and hate lent me fury, and in about three rounds I beat my enemy so handsomely that I gained the respect of such small boys as had been looking on waiting to take the side of the victor, and I never had any more trouble. From that day my school life at Uppingham was a happy one. I had other fights as time went on: one in particular I remember. It was arranged and conducted on the most approved principles, and was brought off in front of a hovel at the end of 'Love Lane,' the lane which runs from the Rockingham Road, between Red Gate and Brooklands. We were good friends before the

battle, but better ones after. Occasionally two big fellows fell out, and a meeting was fixed with much mock mystery, as though to have been found out would have been a capital offence. On one of these occasions, when from the size and strength of both parties and the well-known implacability of one of them, a terrific and bloody combat was looked forward to, we were all in the greatest state of excitement for days. They met, and much scientific sparring resulted in only a black eye and a bloody nose apiece, followed by a shaking of hands, and we youngsters felt on the whole that we had been defrauded. Certainly we never came near the style of the thing for which the Eton playing fields at the close of the eighteenth century were so famous, and to which, and not to cricket or football, the Duke of Wellington's famous if spurious saying refers, about Waterloo being won in the playing fields at Eton.

When once a newcomer had established himself 'vi et armis,' or by any feat of strength or activity (for instance I have known a boy achieve fame and position by walking on his hands), or by skill in any department, even that of books or lessons, or it might be simply by an imperturbable good nature, he found that

the boys on the whole were very friendly. Not but what the spirit of bullying, that is of teasing a weaker or more defenceless boy, or being perpetually on the look-out to annoy unpopular or odd boys who were always called 'mad,' was very rife among the small boys. We had no great brute such as the books about schools always exhibited, who roasted small boys and took delight in making their lives miserable; nor did I ever see in the flesh that other school-book monster, the boy who persecuted a little fellow because he said his prayers. On the contrary, when we drew the curtain of our 'partitions' no one interfered with our privacy; and in the middle of a buzz of conversation a silence would at once ensue, when some perhaps quite small boy's voice was heard with, 'I say you fellows, shut up talking, I am going to "devote."'

In these and all matters of house morality, following the system of self-government which has always been characteristic of Eton, the præpostors had full power and ruled us absolutely. And I must say that they did their duty with strict impartiality. The leaven, which Thring had introduced into the school, of honourable dealing in things small and great,

was working. No boy's property was liable to be confiscated, and it was mostly his own fault if his study was invaded. The only right on which no boy could insist was the right of keeping his own name. He was sure to have a nickname, generally an apt one, which often stuck to him throughout. We had a perfect menagerie of names in the School House, ranging from Camel to Mouse. Camel, Tup, Nanny-goat, Kid, Old Fox, Young Vulp, Old and Young Hairy—short for Hairy Baboon—Goose, Cat, Kitten, Bunny, Jacko, Old Rat and Young Rat, Old and Young Crow, besides Nigger, Eighteen-pence—for a boy whose eyes were different sizes—Scotchy, Paddy, Taffy, Roddy, Softy, Maddy, Frousty, etc. And later, outside the house were Ram, Goat, Wasp, Wiggy, the wonderful 'Gigas,' and The dear old 'Burgher' (of Carlisle). No one minded a nickname, it was of no use if he did; and I fancy that being an animal yourself made you feel all the more friendly to the other beasts.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OLD SCHOOLROOM

I HAVE said that the School numbers had begun to outgrow the School buildings, so I had better say what those buildings were. First of all there was, for Class-room purposes, the old Schoolroom, co-eval with the Foundation: its date, 1584, is still legible, carved outside on the chimney at the east end, though its pretty inscriptions in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, cut on the stone over the doorway, which is at the other end of the building, are fast becoming obliterated; a thing I much regret. They all bear witness to the religious character of the School as founded by Archdeacon Johnson in the reign of Elizabeth.[1]

The Hebrew is from Proverbs xxii. 6, and signifies, 'Train up a child in the way he should go.'

[1] See Appendix I., on The Foundation.

The Greek from S. Mark, x. 14, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me.'

The Latin from Eccles. xii. 1, 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.'

Hebrew was often taught in Elizabethan Schools; and though not ordered by statute in his schools, we know that the founder himself was a Hebrew Scholar, and had his sons taught Hebrew. The eldest of these, Abraham Johnson, knew French, Italian, and Spanish, as well as Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, besides being 'Trained up in Rhetorick, and in Logick, and in Arithmetick, and Geometry, and Naturall Philosophy, and in Musick, both to play and sing.' And thus equipped he went to Cambridge at the age of thirteen. This may seem incredible. But Evelyn in his diary, Jan. 29, 1667, speaks of sending his son to Trinity College, Oxford, 'where I plac'd him not as yet 13 years old. He was newly out of long coates.'

The schoolroom bounds the churchyard on its eastern side. A row of ancient limes borders the path on your right as you go to the schoolroom door from the steps up from the London Road. This road enters Uppingham from the south up a steep hill, and by a cutting with

walls ten feet high on either side; the churchyard being above it on the right, and the rectory garden above it on the left. The lime-tree path running east and west is intersected by that which goes from the south porch of the church past John Beavor's gravestone, and descends by flights of steps to Thring's grave at the bottom of the old portion of the churchyard. But now to look inside the schoolroom. At the further end was the fireplace, whose inadequate efforts were helped by an ugly stove further down the room, and exactly in front of this fireplace was the desk of the 'Head Master and Warden.'[1] Round him, that is in front and on either side of him, as he sat looking down the room towards the door, was his form, ranged in order from his right to his left. Lower down on his left, at another desk, sat the lower master, or, as he was called in those days, *the* Assistant Master, for except the 'Usher and Subwarden,'[1] there was no other. Opposite to him with two or three boys only to attend to, was Mr. Clark, described in the School list as 'Writing and Accidence Master.' He was a most excellent and industrious man, whose whole aspect spoke of respectable poverty. We never saw him in

[1] See for these titles, Appendix I.

any but one suit of clothes, low shoes, white socks, brownish trousers, a black frock coat, a white Gladstone collar, and a black satin stock. His lank light-brown hair, brushed close to his head, and short grey whiskers, completed the picture. He was never seen to sit down; I don't think he would have considered it respectful, for he was humility itself. His duties were to fill the ink-pots and mend pens, and tidy up the room after each school-time; and in school he set copies and heard a little Latin grammar, or did the Multiplication Table with a few backward boys. He had a very quiet manner in teaching, and his invariable attitude was, leaning over his well-polished oak desk with his elbows on it, a quill in one hand and pen-knife in the other. This knife was always sharp, and no one could touch him in the art of pen-making. Perhaps it was this we respected him for; certainly, poor old thing as he was, no boy dreamt of being rude to him. But what a curious survival he was! He wrote a clear copper-plate hand, and made out the bills at the end of the half. Where he lived and when he died I never knew; but after one holidays he was not at his desk, and his place knew him no more.

The schoolroom, with its row of big small-paned windows on the south, and its large west window over the door, was always well lighted: better a good deal than the class-room to which a short passage led from the north-east end of the schoolroom. In this room sat the 'Usher and Subwarden' and some eighteen of the most unsatisfactory boys a man could well have under him. They were not villains, far from it, they were well-disposed and good-natured to a fault, and perfectly content to learn nothing. But for one sharp boy there were three dullards, some of a surprising age, and who never could, and never did, get out of the form which was a combination of the third and fourth, just as the Head-Master's was a combination of the fifth and sixth. The other class in the schoolroom, taken by the assistant, was the first and second, only the most incapable sitting occasionally before old Clark. I had my period in one and two. In this class the desks were not ranged round the master, but when called up, we sat round him on forms having no desks in front of us, a very uncomfortable proceeding. But we used to sit very still, whilst the master opened the works of his watch and, after long and carefully

examining them, invariably blew into them, a performance which went on long enough if we did not interrupt it, and from which the watch, a small gold one, never seemed to get much real benefit. A little construing or repetition, said very slowly on purpose, and sometimes a bit of Latin prose, or some verses looked over (for we did them in the second form then), and at last the hour for release arrived. This master had a way of collecting our exercises at the end of school, and putting them into his desk, from which, if we did not wish them to be looked over, we abstracted them, and when asked, 'I haven't seen your exercise, have I?' 'I showed it up, Sir,' was all that was needed, and a boy might with luck go for a month without being looked over at all. The fact was, that the master had mistaken his vocation. He was clever enough, and could have coached young men very well; but had no heart in his work with us, which was a drudgery to him; and though he could be very sharp on us if he thought we were trying to humbug him, he did not care much whether we learnt, or whether we didn't, so we didn't. Such a master, of course, did infinite harm; but when he left we

were sorry, as we had an easy time with him, and we subscribed to give him a present, and chose—would you believe it—a large Family Bible. What little asses he must have thought us!

In the little class-room things were quite different. The teacher there did not pretend to be a scholar, but he was a good mathematician, and very accurate in all things, and above all a disciplinarian. With him every little thing was important; and it said a good deal for our skill that I, as a little boy of eleven, sitting between two big day-boys of seventeen and eighteen, was able to join with them in consuming a fair lot of apples and Siberian crabs, of which my big friends always had a pocket full, without any even momentary unpleasantness arising between the master and ourselves. The second school began with repetition, often geographical, which it was our plan, by many devices, to spin out as long as possible; then we sat down to real nasty hard work till twelve, and though in the lower forms the rule was to learn as little as you could, you had to imbibe a little knowledge. At that time the old-fashioned horrid way of looking on a master as your natural enemy, to be defeated in

all his attempts on your intelligence by any wiles you could manage, was not yet obsolete, as I am happy to say it is now in all Public Schools, unless the master is entirely unsympathetic, in which case we must exonerate the boys.

Third school began at 2.30, and lasted two mortal hours, and was always mathematics. The Head Master never came in for this, but Mr. Clark took a form. Oh, what a dreary time that was to all but the head boys, who really liked the work! We sat and scribbled pictures, or cut our names, and did any sort of thing to pass the time. Some read a book, and every now and then we did a little spurt of work, and then we played our trump card, as one after another we went up to the master with, 'Please, Sir, may I go out?' and we passed out through a door near Mr. Clark's desk, into a little odd-shaped back-yard, where a bat and ball were always to be found, and the wickets were chalked on the wall, and so for ten to twenty minutes we enjoyed ourselves. It was a poor place for relaxation, but anything was better than sitting in school doing, or pretending to do sums, and as we always managed for two or three at a

time to be out together, we always got a game. Then we went in again, and felt that we could manage to last out till half-past four, and even to do a little work without losing character. At half-past four school was over, and boys and masters were equally glad.

## CHAPTER III

### THE STUDIES

THE studies were of no great antiquity, the four nearest the School gate being of later date than the nineteen others.

They still exist, forming two sides of the old rectangular School 'Quad.' The roof of the first four slopes towards the 'Quad,' the others have a straight-faced wall which used to be covered with roses, honey-suckle, and ivy, of which we took great care, watering and training the plants most assiduously. Their roof could not be seen from the 'Quad,' as it sloped outwards into a narrow passage called the 'jetty,' which, passing along by the Rectory garden west wall and by the White Hart stables, connected Leamington Terrace with the School Lane. In the angle of the studies rose and still rises a white stone

chimney of some pretensions, for there was the boiler to heat the pipes, and as soon as the Head-Master's step was heard leaving his house to make the round of the studies a rap with something metallic on the pipes in study No. 1 conveyed the intelligence all down the line, and acted as a 'cave'!

We had no private work in the earliest days, though it came all too soon; but we sat from tea till prayers, and from prayers till bed-time in our studies, doing our work or reading or writing as we pleased; only we had to keep each in his own study. If a præpostor heard a step in the 'Quad'—and they were pretty vigilant—he holloaed out; and unless a small boy could show good reason for being out of his study he was kicked and sent back. Still we never minded running the risk if we wanted to confer with a friend. There were ingenious boys who had a telegraph between their studies, with a code, by means of which they could, to a limited extent, converse without leaving their chairs. Those evenings in our studies were not so good for work perhaps, but we were very sorry to have to give them up for private work in class-rooms, to which, when new houses were built,

all but the sixth had to turn out from seven to nine.

After nine o'clock, prayers and call over, we had three quarters of an hour's enjoyment. We were supposed to be at work, or at all events quiet in our studies then; but first of all those who were chums visited one another's studies to see what was left in the hamper, or to join at devouring something laid in from 'Nicholl's,' as the tuck-shop in the School Lane was called. Then we had some practice at jumping and vaulting, the latter in the Hall over the different tables, or we roasted chestnuts in the Hall, for there was always a splendid fire there in the huge grate. But this we could not do when the Head Master took his class for extra construing in the Hall. This construing was on a Thursday, when the Head Master took his form through the *Agamemnon*, or Cicero's *Letters to Atticus*, etc., giving a translation without much comment in very vigorous English, which, in the case of the *Agamemnon* rose to a high poetic level. We always heard hopes expressed by the sixth form that he would publish a verse translation of that play, and it was said to be already in Manuscript, but I think that

Conington's translation cut the ground away; at all events it never saw the light, and we only heard splendid bits of it now and then.[1]

The Head Master was pretty regular in coming round to all the studies in the School-House 'Quad' some time between 7.45 and 8.45, and when once he had been round we ventured to move about more freely. He used to knock at our doors and look in with a nod, and sometimes with a pleasant or a grim remark. I remember once I had been skinning a hedge-hog, and as the skin seemed to be a little high I burnt some scent to make things pleasanter, and he said, with a sniff, 'Bene olet qui nihil olet.' After he had gone a boy came to me and said, 'What did Teddy say to you?' I told him. 'Why, that's exactly what he said to me.' 'Why, had you got any scent?' 'Rather not; but just before he came a beast of a daddy longlegs got into the candle and burnt himself up, and made a horrid stink.'

[1] Since this was written a prospectus has reached me of 'The Agamemnon of Æschylus, translated into English verse by Edward Thring, Head Master of Uppingham, 1854-1887.' Why this is not 1853 I don't know. So at last, after lying by for over forty years, this sees the light.

After prayers he never came round at all, and he was so bent on always treating us as gentlemen that I don't believe he would have dreamt of doing so without first giving us notice. That was one of the things we recognised about him. He always behaved like a gentleman to us, and we had to do the same to him. No sneaking where Teddy was concerned. It was reserved for a new master to begin the custom of coming round after prayers, or twice in a night before prayers, and trying to catch boys out of their studies, and then 'sending them up at twelve' next day to be flogged; and, naturally, we never forgave him.

I said he used to knock at our doors, though when we heard him coming we generally opened before he had the trouble to knock. But once, I remember well, he found a boy asleep. There were two brothers in one study; I was fag to the elder, and one of my duties was to keep his tobacco-jar filled. He had been taking his usual evening pipe, and it was his young brother's duty to listen for the footsteps and open the door to let out the smell of smoke. All our doors opened to the outer air. But the water-pipes were hot, and it not unfrequently

happened that the little study got stuffy, and a boy would go fast asleep. On this occasion the brothers both fell asleep, and when, after twice knocking, the door was opened, the whole thing was revealed. That was the end of such open defiance of school rules; but it caused a new regulation which vexed our conservative spirits. A latch with a handle outside was fitted by the blacksmith to each of our study doors (previously we had no handles, and each boy had his own latch-key), and after seven we had to peg up the latch inside, an iron pin on a short chain being provided for the purpose; thus the Head Master could enter without knocking. It was really no gain to him in point of time, but it was in our eye a degradation, a privilege curtailed; our castle from seven to ten was no longer our own.

Of course opinions would differ widely on this as on most things; and I once heard a parent, looking at these studies, say, 'What holes; I would not keep a dog in one of them.' Certainly, opening as they did to the outer air, and being no bigger than a double sentry-box, they did not commend themselves to the modern parent, but they were very dear to us when we inhabited them, and the opening to

the outer air perforce kept them fresh and sweet, though we naturally did everything to make them stuffy. The first thing a boy did on having one allotted to him was to get an order on Hales the tailor to do it up. This meant having the back wall and any exposed surface under the book-case, and on each side of the window, lined with green baize, where sometimes between the lining and the wall a mouse would scramble, raising a little green baize wave as he passed. Then the book-shelves were decorated with green braid and brass nails, a green baize curtain to draw across the window, and another reaching to the floor to draw across the study from back to front, and so divide the boarded part of it, on which the table and two chairs stood, from the brick part, on which the door opened. Once we returned after the summer holidays to hear that a sanitary order had gone forth that baize should be no more; and we found all our walls stripped and papered—a hateful change, which it took long to be reconciled to, and in the eyes of many an injury not to be forgiven. On Sunday night we could get leave to sit two in a study, when we always selected our particular chums, and had a

pleasant time, writing our Sunday letters and talking of home and holidays, or reading library books and chatting till the bell rang for prayers, after which each retired to his own den. Yes, those studies were a great deal more comfortable than they looked, and we never dreamed of bettering them.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SCHOOL HOUSE

THE studies in the School 'Quad' were, I believe, the invention of Dr. Holden; but the principle that every boy in the school should have one was Thring's. When I first got to Uppingham there were thirty-three boys in the dormitories, and only twenty-three studies, so four of us had the little room in the House which I have spoken of, and which lay between the pantry and the music-room, and was therefore not ideally situated, while the other six boys had two rooms in the 'Lodge' which got its name from this, and lay at the further end of the inner 'Quad,' about which we will say something later.

The School House consisted of three main portions. The old School House or Hospital, as founded in Elizabethan days, was a long,

low, straight building fronting the garden terrace, and now mainly occupied by the beautiful School Library. The outside of this remains just as it always was, and nothing that has since been built at Uppingham can ever hope to equal in beauty and fitness that old Elizabethan Hospital of Archdeacon Johnson. To each end of this an addition had been made later: to the west a drawing-room and a bedroom over it, running up higher than the old roof, which only admitted very low rooms; and to the east a couple of square rooms, one above the other, which formed the library and sixth-form room, with dormitory Number 4 above. This addition had been made in precisely the same style externally as the rest of the old building, with the characteristic stone dormer window looking out on the garden terrace, and was just a prolongation eastwards of the original design. Of this long, low building, one half was devoted to the use of the boys, and the other half was the private part of the Head-Master's house. There was singularly little room in it. The dining-room was even smaller than the study, and how small that was can be seen from the brass strip let into the floor of the present Library, and these with the

rooms over them were all that he had in that part of the house till Dr. Holden's extension to the west was made. But part two was also his, and consisted of a couple of nurseries with the entrance passage and one rather dark sitting-room beneath them, while to the north was the matron's sitting-room and the kitchen, which had no rooms over them. The third portion of the house was all of Dr. Holden's date, and consisted of a good-sized dining-hall with two dormitories above, all higher than the old rooms, and the latter, not flat-ceiled, but with the tie-beams left visible. This block was built on the north side of the pantry and music-room, making the passage to these rooms and to our little study, which lay between them, very dark. Above it, at the west end, was the bell turret, in which hung the School Bell which is still in use. If you stand in the present library, near the door, and look down the room, you look along what was once the Head-Master's study, then along the pantry, and then through our little study, later used as a sick-room, then through the music-room (one window corresponding to each room), and finally to the old library and sixth-form room, which had windows both to the south and east.

Of these rooms our study was a very odd-shaped one, wider at one end than the other, with a glass door that let light into the perfectly dark passage in which was the entrance to the beer cellar, and with the fire-place set against the inside or passage wall. But it was light, as, besides the one original window which was a practicable one, we had another consisting of a narrow slip about twelve inches wide of plate-glass, which did not open, and which had not been contemplated in the original building, but is still to be found in the new. I have said that in later times this study was used as a sick-room, and except for the noise of the pantry it was a pleasant little room enough; and even the neighbourhood of the pantry was not altogether without some use, for when a boy was left with his bottle of the invariable nitre-and-water to be taken every three or four hours standing by his bedside, he being aware of a convenient mouse-hole which went under the said pantry floor, would carefully measure out the proper dose for the little animal, and proceed to pour it down the hole, pointing to the diminished bottle when the matron came to administer it, as proof that it had been duly consumed.

The music-room was a very dark place, warmed by a stove, and also used later for a sick-room. A short flight of steps led up from it to the dining-hall, opening into it at the south-east corner. In this dull cave the School music had its birth, destined to come forth ere long to find its way to the light and add distinction to the name of Uppingham.

The sixth-form room was only to be approached in those days from the School 'Quad.' It was a most comfortable place. It was my luck, as quite a small boy, to be made sixth-form-room fag, which gave me the run of the library and the privilege of warming myself, if nobody else was there, by the fire, which I carefully tended. I was the only boy ever appointed to this post, and it was a great delight to me while it lasted.

No such comfortable room ever fell to the lot of the sixth form when once this was given up; no open fire round which to sit after dinner or football, and no room so handy to get at as this was, it being right in the middle of the 'Quad,' and that at a time when all the sixth were in the School House. The library shelves were ranged all round the room, and boys could come between dinner and third school to get

books out, the præpostor of the week attending to them.

Among the small boys the Waverley novels and Fenimore Cooper's, and the *Romance of War* and Catlin's *North American Indians* were the prime favourites, while Galton on 'Travel' and De Quincey, and the *History of the Peninsular Campaign* and Layard's *Nineveh* had many readers, as also had several of Neale's books, the latter chiefly for Sundays. The sixth were very good in advising a small boy what to read; and it seems to me, looking back over half a century, that they read more and knew more about the books then than boys now do, or have done since athletics came more into vogue, and cricket and football became the great gods of the schoolboys.

When the new schoolroom was built and the library under it, this delightful sixth-form room was given up and turned into a spare room for the Head-Master's guests. It was here that after a big concert one of the chief performers, who, like all musical men, was inconsolable if he could not get his cigar in the evening, being received as an honoured guest by the Head Master, was once quartered for the night. He had had duly impressed upon him the fact that

the Head Master could not abide tobacco; there was no smoking-room, and he did not know his way into the garden. What was he to do? His cigar he must have; smoke in his bedroom in the Head-Master's house he dared not. Sadly he went to bed; but an ingenious idea came to him, and before he slept he took a cigar between his teeth and slowly ate the whole of it.

I have still the dormitories to say something about. We went up a wooden staircase from the Hall door, and then either turned to the left and went up another and shorter flight to get to Nos. 5 and 6, which were over the Hall, or we went down two steps into a corridor running to the left, out of which all the doors of the other dormitories opened. Number 5 was the biggest room, and had nine 'partitions' in it, and both these rooms and Number 4 had boarded floors; Numbers 1, 2, and 3 had all once had concrete floors like the corridor, but the ceiling of the room under Number 1 had been raised at one time, so one had to go up two or three steps into it, and that floor had been laid with boards. This alteration made the room low, but it brought the window within reach; in the other rooms they were too high up for

us to see anything but trees and sky out of them. The door at the beginning of the corridor close to Number 1 led to the matron's bedroom, and her room, which was above the study, was a buffer between us and the Head-Master's quarters. One, two, and three each held but four boys. The rooms, with their old stone-tiled roof, inside of which was, I believe, a perfect forest of oak rafters, among which we used to hear the rats having magnificent steeple-chases, were nice and cool in summer; but in winter, with no fires and those cold concrete floors, they could be terribly arctic; and there are few things more vividly printed on my memory than the accents of indignant horror with which the first boy to get into bed would make the announcement that we had got clean sheets. They were linen, the warmer cotton article was not yet in use, and they always felt like ice. 'Oh, I *say*, you fellows! Look at this!' 'Why, what's up?' 'Clean straw, by all that's horrible! Oh, my! how cold it is!' 'Clean straw! You don't mean it? By Jove, it is though! What a chouse! Ugh!' However, there was nothing for it but for the boy to sit on his pillow, wrap his feet carefully in the tail of his nightshirt,

and so, curled up like an ammonite, to slip down gradually under the clothes, and then, drawing them right over his head (and they were none too thick, no extra red blankets, and no boy ever had in those days such a thing as a dressing-gown to spread over him, while very few had a railway-rug), he would soon be heard puffing and blowing long warm breaths from his lungs to raise the temperature.

Number 3 alone had a fire-place, with a black board in front of it. This was in my partition, and occasionally, having smuggled up enough wood and coal, we used to get out of bed about 11 p.m. and light a fire there and sit over it for an hour or more. I don't think that any Welsh rarebit was ever so good as that which we cooked in my partition, or any cocoa so 'grateful and comforting.'

Number 4, into which I was introduced as a new boy, held eight partitions; it was wider than the other rooms, and had a sort of dresser in the middle, and having a boarded floor, and being over the sixth-form room, where there was always a fire and gas, it was not so cold as 2 and 3. But I liked Number 3, it was good for gymnastics, there being an iron curtain bar

only two feet long, between two uprights, on which we practised pulling up till we could get the chin over the bar, and go down the full extent of the arms, thirty-two times in succession. On a thicker bar, such as that in the gymnasium, this was not attainable. Number 4 was nice and light, and it had a window looking east towards the church, as well as the picturesque little dormer window to the south, which can still be seen; for when the building was taken down to throw the whole height of the two floors into one for the present library, the stones all went up again in their places, and the south front looks exactly as it did of old.

It was in this room that one of the lower boys was once laid up with some ailment which kept him in bed for two or three weeks, and during all that time, almost every day, in the afternoon, the Head Master used to pay the little fellow a visit, sitting on his bed and chatting, and always ready to quote some of 'Horatius' or 'Ivry,' for the boy was amusing himself with learning Macaulay's 'Lays'; but what he most frequently spouted, and he did it with real enjoyment, were the lines from the 'Battle of Lake Regillus':

'And wounded horses kicking,
And snorting purple foam.
Right well did such a couch befit
A consular of Rome.'

These visits were a bit of real kindness, and never forgotten.

The cold made us often very disinclined to get up in the morning: and it was a common thing in the winter for a boy, especially if he had not well prepared his lesson, or not finished something which had to be shown up first school, to 'lie up.' After the bell had stopped, and all the boys' footsteps had echoed away beyond the House and 'Quad,' the matron came round, and finding a boy's curtain not drawn back, looked in to enquire what was the matter with him. You generally had a headache as the simplest malady, but different boys affected different complaints; and as she sometimes found four or five boys thus sadly afflicted, the practice was started of giving every sufferer a 'black dose,' after which you got up and, if really bad, you stayed out of school; but if decidedly better, you took a paper to the Head Master to be signed, on which was written, 'Smith mi. aegrotat,' and you went into second school. This shamming was a regular institution, but

'black dose' did much to kill it. Until that was invented, the explaining your malady to the matron and presenting the paper to be signed were the only two disagreeables connected with it.

The matrons, as a rule, were very good to us. And if with a kind heart they combined a little sense of humour, we got on admirably; but pomposity we could not endure; and when a matron once made us a little speech at teatime, ending with the words, 'Horders is horders, and hI'm mistress in the 'all,' the inextinguishable laughter which arose really made one afterwards feel quite sorry for the poor silly old thing.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SCHOOL-HOUSE HALL

THE Hall had apparently been built smaller and lengthened afterwards, a beam across the ceiling showing the place of the new departure. But, in spite of the new bit, the Hall did not project eastwards any further than the end of the oldest part of the School House, which finished with dormitory Number 3. The library, with dormitory No. 4 over it, pushed further to the east, its north side forming with the east end of the Hall an angle in which were two doorways, side by side; that on the left was the entrance to the library, but that on the right was without a door, and led to the washing-room, where were a row of basins hollowed out of solid blocks of stone. The floor was paved with stone, and there was a force-pump. These stone basins held a large quantity of water, and

we used it freely, which was, I suppose, the reason why they were abolished, and small enamelled basins, let into a wooden shelf, put into their place. They were mean by comparison, but we gained in number what we lost in size of basins. On the stone lintel of the doorway, in deep-cut letters eight inches long, a boy had carved his name, and carved it well, WROTH, but it was so outrageously conspicuous that he was called to account for it, when the tradition, which was then but a few years old, said that he had exclaimed, 'Name, Sir? Oh, no Sir! it is *Washing Room Of The Hospital.*' There were three brothers of this name at the School under Dr. Butterton, of whom the second, H. T. Wroth, was captain of the School in 1842.

'The Hospital?'[1] Few Uppingham boys now-a-days ever hear that word applied to their school, but it was common enough then; and when, in 1863, we determined to start the Magazine, which is still alive, having had a longer existence, I believe, than that of any other school periodical, we carefully studied a number of a previous Magazine, of which the library then possessed a copy, and which

[1] Concerning the origin of this name see Appendix I.

chronicled facts, I think, about Oakham as well as Uppingham, and was called *The Hospitaller*.

To this stone-paved washing-room with its open doorway and window, the latter being just a square opening in a wall more than two feet thick, two or three of us used to come down summer and winter at 6.30, sometimes with snow pelting in upon us as we stood on a coco mat to dry ourselves, but more often in the genial air of the early spring, summer, or autumn mornings; and, pumping up huge cans-full of water, we mounted in turn upon the basins and sent the cold deluge over the naked chest and shoulders of the boy below. We had two cans apiece, and then, after a good rub, hurrying on some clothes, we rushed up, all glowing with warmth, to finish our dressing in the dormitory.

For several halves we never missed a day of this, except when we started at six, and ran through the town and by the Seaton Road down to the bathing place, below where the station now is, and had a swim, and then ran back to finish dressing, and be in time for seven o'clock school. One boy I have known take a hammer down to break the ice, but at

such seasons I preferred the washing-room. The pump went fairly hard, and it was one of our exercises for strengthening the muscles of the arm to pump the two hundred strokes needed to fill the cistern, first with both hands, then with the right alone without stopping. You could not get to work with the left, as the pump stood right-handed against the wall. By practising daily it was astonishing how soon one got to be able to do this with ease, though at first thirty strokes seemed to be quite enough.

Of the dining-hall itself I have as yet said but little; and yet, till we had the present schoolroom, it was the centre of our school life, even long after the School had spread beyond the bounds of the School House. Here all assembled at 10 o'clock; here the addresses to the School, whether in praise or blame—and they were often the latter—all took place; the boys sent up at 12 o'clock came here; and here, at times, concerts were held and sermons were delivered. It was also the class-room for the Head-Master's division, where he took all his construing lessons; his composition he looked over mostly in his study after tea. It was here that, once a week, the next division,

and in later years, once a month, the lower divisions, came to do a lesson with the Head Master, an event looked forward to by all with the utmost dread. They could never reckon on getting safely through, and the questions he asked them, and above all the way in which he asked them, and the sort of answers he expected, were so many separate terrors. 'What is a horse?' 'How would you set about describing a horse?' How thankful we were that it was a day-boy who, with the courage born of ignorance, rushed into the breach and drew down the vials of wrath upon his devoted head by saying, 'A horse is an animal with four legs and a bushy tail,' the first syllable of which adjective he pronounced to rhyme with 'hush.'

The walls of the room were hung with some fine Roman photographs, and on a wet half-holiday Mr. Thring would at times show us a whole portfolio full of them, many of which were afterwards framed and hung on the walls of the Head-Master's class-room. At other times he would give a lecture—with experiments, at which we assisted—on an air-pump which had been presented to the School by a benefactor of the name of Martin. I suppose

it was owing to this that when a new master came who had to teach a low class in arithmetic, his boys were all provided with a small illustrated handbook of hydraulics and hydrostatics, from which we learnt the action of the common suction and force pumps.

Besides these pictures and the Hall clock, there were certain texts and aphorisms hung in the Hall; one was, 'Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him.' And one in larger letters bore the mystic words, 'Unde? Quo? Quomodo?'

Unlike the other houses which began soon to be built, the furniture of the School-House Hall was entirely of oak; there were four long narrow light oak tables with drawers for books, and one short one. Some of these are to be seen in the Museum and in various class-rooms still, but a splendid old table across the end of the Hall where the præpostors sat for meals, and at which the Head Master took his form, and at which he carved at dinner, always using the Latin grace which is given in the Appendix, has, I fear, quite disappeared. It measured about five feet by twelve, nearly twice the width of the other tables, and was dark with

age, heavy, and furnished with a foot rail; it had not always belonged to the School, I believe, but from its appearance it might well have been coeval with the foundation. Two dark oak arm-chairs, of a plain old pattern, were at either end, while several oak forms, and two more modern arm-chairs, with panelled backs, completed the furniture.

The mention of the twelve o'clock function in the School Hall recalls 'the Jackson row,' from the fact that it was here that the Jacksons suffered for their sins the almost nominal punishment which produced the biggest storm in a tea-pot that ever ruffled the current of Uppingham prosperity. It was at Easter, and as the short holiday was very apt to be unduly prolonged by one excuse or another, to the great dislocation of school work, a warning was issued that any boy who returned late would render himself liable to a flogging. The two boys in question knew this, and knew how slight a thing such a flogging was, and they deliberately chose to have an extra day or two and pay the penalty. This they did with the utmost cheerfulness. I saw them come out from the Hall after it, gleefully skipping, and saying, 'Well, that didn't hurt a bit.' There it should have

ended; but soon afterwards their father was weak enough to write and complain that the boys had been detained to see their grandmother, and that it was very hard that for such a deed of piety they should at their age of seventeen and eighteen be subjected to the indignity of a flogging.

The boys were low in the School, and so very small that no one would have guessed them to be more than twelve or thirteen. They themselves were astonished at any fuss being made of the matter. They had felt no sense of injustice or degradation, but it was hardly to be expected that they should have the manliness to stop their father's action, and they naturally liked to feel that they were objects of interest. *Punch* then got hold of it, and spoke of the cruel Head Master who flogged boys for paying a visit to their grandmamma: adding, that if he did not train their minds, he certainly made them mind their trains. Then the whole press took it up as 'the great flogging scandal,' making of course the utmost of the age of the boys, and the School and its Head were gibbeted everywhere as the great flogging school, whose inhuman Head Master was cruel and barbarous to a

degree not heard of since the Middle Ages. The whole thing was the most utter twaddle, as all the boys in the School well knew. The Jacksons disappeared in a halo of ill-earned fame, and amidst a chorus of mistaken sympathy from the British public. But the result was that people were shy of entering their sons at Uppingham for at least a year.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE 'QUADS'

THE study 'Quad' remains much as it was, except that the studies are no longer inhabited; they look the same still, and you may still see the letter-box which was put into the door of the editor of the School Magazine, and in which he used to find so few contributions; but the wall to the south, through whose railings a view of the country can now be seen, was originally a very high wall, equal to the bit which remains still over the doorway leading to the gymnasium, and to climb up there and to cut your name on the top was the feat of only a few. Two splendid sycamores towered up and looked over the wall, and their bronze-green leaves in spring and the tasselled flowers which succeeded were a beautiful sight. But the inner 'Quad' was

very different. There was no way through where the path now goes to the chapel and schoolroom. The 'lodge' studies reached out further towards the chapel, and the whole space between them and the School-House offices was filled by a large roofed bat-fives court, called 'the tectum.' It had a back wall reaching up to the roof, which in front rested on broad brick pillars about eighteen inches in diameter; the two ends were built up to the roof, which was of whitewashed board inside, and slate outside. The floor was laid with bricks, and one stone a foot square was let in about ten feet from one end, on which the ball was bounced to start the game, a low-service line being painted on the south-end wall about two feet six inches from the ground. It was intended for bat-fives, but we usually played with our hands, and didn't care much for it, as there was an Eton court within a few yards. This is the uncovered court which still, I believe, exists. This 'tectum' soon had a capital Eton court built inside it, and there the Head Master, who was a first-rate fives player, used often to play with the pick of the boys; and when his old Eton friend Witts, known to us all as 'Daddy Witts,' who by the handsome gift of a thousand

pounds started the fund for the chapel, and was also the builder of Highfield, came as a master, the game was always 'Boys against Masters,' and some splendid games we had year after year, for they played several generations of boys. I remember seeing a sharp low return from the Head Master, who always played with tremendous vigour, strike his partner a rattling blow on the back of the head, and when we looked for the usual apology, all we heard was a grim 'Why don't you get your head out of the light?' When the 'tectum' was taken down to make a passage through to the site chosen for the chapel and schoolroom, a fives court was built between the old open court and the school-lane wall, and the 'tectum' roof was put over it, the glass roof to keep the outer end of the court dry being added many years later by private subscription.

From the north end of the 'tectum' ran a long range of brick buildings of modern date, which reached to the lodge. These were Dr. Holden's stables; they were on your left as you went to the lodge, while on your right, starting from the wall at the back of the fives courts, were some disused buildings, of which the first was a pig-stye. It was not used for pigs in my time,

but it served as a good hiding-place for a small boy when fleeing from the well-merited wrath of some bigger boy whom he had insulted. I have found it of service myself, for there are occasions when a small boy comes to feel the truth of the sailor's adage, 'Any port in a storm.'

The 'tectum' was not the first bat-fives court built at Uppingham. If you went down the steps which now lead from the study 'Quad' to the gymnasium in the days when as yet no gymnasium existed, you landed in a paved court where now the Head-Master's green-house stands; this was not quite level, but sloped gently down to a low wall with flat stone coping, carved with many a name, and forming what is usually so abominably absent from all school premises, a convenient place for a boy to sit. In this court I have seen a little play with the fives-bat, an instrument like a small wooden racket, about eighteen inches long, and half an inch thick at the bat end, having a thin pliant handle shaped like a paper-knife, but thickening again, and bound with leather at the end you grasped. This was the instrument we used, but it drove too hard for use in a court with an open end, so never was satisfactory, and the introduction of Eton fives soon killed the game

altogether. The way to 'bag' a fives court was to throw a ball up and hit the back wall above the service line. Often a whole shower of balls would fly together, and the first hit took the court. The bigger boys sat at dinner farthest from the door, and often entrusted an active youngster, who sat low down near the door, with a ball. He would then rush out on the last word of the Latin Grace,[1] and if successful was allowed to use the court till wanted, and to keep the ball. Sometimes a day-boy was made use of, as he could 'keep the court' all dinner-time.

I have seen boys (tell it not in Gath) playing Hop Scotch and pegtop in that court, and even marbles, with the oft-repeated cry of 'knuckle down.' This was in the day of small things, when Uppingham was still called a Grammar School, and one-third of the boys were day-boys, and we wrote in our school-books, after our names, U.G.S. But the præpostors, who even then seemed to have an intuitive fore-knowledge of the dignity which was to come, very properly used to take these toys away and kick their owners. Later, single-stick and boxing took the place of these amusements, and

[1] See Appendix II.

were prosecuted with the utmost vigour by boys both small and big.

At the foot of the straight flight of steps which led from the 'Quad' to this old court, stood the first of the sycamores, with a straight unclimbable stem; lower down was another which we *could* get into; and here there was generally, on a summer afternoon or evening, some boy pretending to read. Below was a curious-shaped place guarded by a green iron railing, called the 'Tarpeian'; and it was a recognised amusement for the big boys to hold a new boy by his jacket collar over the railings, and give him a dexterous twirl as they dropped him, so that when he pitched on his feet at the bottom (it was only a fall of a few feet), he should tumble backwards, when, unless he was very active, he might fall into the spring of ever-flowing water, which was caught in an oblong stone basin about ten inches deep, just under the spot where the big boy stood. The water was not visible from above, and you could not drop a boy straight into it. It was only the result of the dexterous twirl and his own clumsiness if he fell in; indeed, I only once knew a boy get wet, but there was always the chance that he might, and it was an unpleasantly

exciting moment for the small boy, and a test of his agility. Such being the case, when a boy had once been dropped he could claim exemption. Really it looked worse than it was; however, it was one of the regular ordeals for a new boy, who, having gone through it, was of course most anxious to see every other new boy put to the test. Having been dropped, a boy walked out between two high walls, and so came into the School gardens, for the use of which the spring was impounded. These gardens were below the fives-court wall, and occupied the space where later the gymnasium was built. There were three little bits of box-edged border at the foot of the wall itself, along which an old wistaria ran its twisted length, and hung out its pale lilac flowers. The rest of the slope was divided by narrow paths into three rows of little oblong patches, each about nine feet by three, and all set round with box. Most of these were allotted to, and kept in excellent order by School-House boys. Mr. and Mrs. Thring took a keen interest in the gardens, often visiting them, and giving us at one time a lot of bedding stuff, and at another some larger plants as prizes for the best gardeners. A row of limes bordered the garden on the east,

and a wall with a broad flat stone coping, with steep ascents from terrace to terrace—a favourite exercising place for the active and sure-footed small boy. All this was swept away when the gymnasium was built—a plain cheap building, but what a gain it was to us all! And how indefatigably we worked in it! Learning slowly at first when everything was new, but advancing with ever-lengthening strides to the acquisition of new and more daring feats; doing one month what seemed to us impossible the previous month, and increasing in all our measurements to a degree which was really wonderful.

## CHAPTER VII

### NEW HOUSES

THE School House when Edward Thring first came to it was not full. Between his advent and the departure of Dr. Holden, who carried off some of his boys with him to Durham, there was a short interregnum, during which the reins of government had been in the hands of Mr. Coker Adams, who on Mr. Thring's arrival was very nearly out of his mind with anxiety and terror and absolute inability to cope with the lawlessness he found. Indeed, the account which Mr. Thring gave me of the state things had got into, and the condition of the unfortunate *locum tenens*, were more like the description of a nightmare and its attendant visions than any scenes of real school life. Thring, however, soon reduced things to order, and in a couple of years the School

House was more than full, and the plan which he had already laid out, and even committed to paper, for creating a big school and practically refounding Uppingham, began to take outward and visible form.

A Miss Adams had occupied a big house at the upper end of the town as a girl's school. The school was for some reason or other given up, and the house was taken over, and became the first of all the many School Houses, and still goes on under the name its fourth possessor gave it, of 'Lorne House.' The first master who had it, worked with most unceasing vigour in laying out the garden; he had very few boys in it to call for his attention; but from this date onwards more boys kept coming, and with them new masters, and with them new houses; for it was by the personal outlay of these new masters that the houses were built, such confidence in his plans did Thring inspire. How Baverstock came and built 'West Dene'; how the 'Usher and Sub-Warden' made studies and dormitories in the house just opposite the 'Lodge,' which had once been the Bank; how the Rev. R. J. Hodgkinson came to the 'Lodge' and built the Hall and dormitories, turning with great ingenuity Dr. Holden's stable

and potato house into studies, and sweeping away the piggery, etc., altogether; how Dr. Stokoe turned the 'Horse and Trumpet' Inn-yard into the first School House which never had a name, I will not stop to relate. The greatest change came when Mr. W. J. Earle built Brooklands, and Mr. Witts followed suit with Highfield, and so founded the colony of the hill houses.

I remember the half holiday we had when the School numbers reached a hundred; soon to be followed by one for the next century, and this in spite of an almost absolute cessation of entries during the year following on the ridiculous 'Jackson row.' The numbers ever grew and houses were opened to receive them, the dining halls in which became class-rooms; even the Head Master gave up going to the old Schoolroom and took his form in the School-House Hall. But for the general meeting of the whole school at 10 o'clock there was as yet no adequate place. We thronged into the School-House Hall and filled it from end to end; and nothing more decided the Head Master in his determination to hasten on the building of a big schoolroom than the sudden realisation of the aptness of his own

text when, on rising as usual one Sunday evening to address us all there assembled, he found himself saying, 'And the house of Baal was full from one end to the other.' He himself told me how the aptness of the text struck him as soon as he had given it out; and how the humour of the situation went very near to upset his gravity.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUNDAYS

THE Sunday sermon was a great feature. It was first preached by the Head Master to the School House alone. Day-boys, who were numerous, had no part or share in it. And what vigorous sermons they were! They are published in his first volume of *School Sermons*, and for terseness and personal application to boys and the needs of school life, those short sermons, lasting from ten to fifteen minutes, beat, with a few rare exceptions, all the longer and more philosophical addresses which he delivered from the Chapel pulpit: and the effect they had on boys was very marked.

The late Archbishop Benson, when he was Head Master of Wellington, at a Head-Masters' conference held in Winchester (and

I suppose I need hardly pause here to say that the Head-Masters' conference was originated by Edward Thring, and the first conference of all held at Uppingham), gave an account of how Sunday was spent at Wellington College. It was, according to his account, a truly ideal day: and certainly Sunday in Mr. Thring's wisdom became not only a day of rest, but a day of pleasure and also of profit to all decent boys at Uppingham. I say it *became* so, for it was not so from the first. My earliest recollections of Sundays at Uppingham were on this wise. We got up and went down to the old Schoolroom at eight instead of seven. This was a real boon on a winter's morning. I forget whether the Head Master took his class in the Hall or not, certainly he did not come to the old Schoolroom, but he enjoyed his Sunday 'lie' if only for an hour. In all his time he was never, I believe, late for morning school; but I have heard him say that the getting out of bed in the morning was always the greatest struggle and the most distasteful part of his duty, and he never got used to it. In writing about the trials of school life he has said that there are plenty of things to try a boy, the right performance

of which give him strength of character ; and that you need not go out of your way to search for them, they will present themselves soon enough ; and that, meantime, getting up to early school each morning is quite trial enough for the average boy.

Poor old Clark had his day of rest to himself. But two masters were in the Schoolroom, and the upper of the two classes always did Greek Testament. It was a horrid lesson. We took no interest in it whatever, and were only expected to get up and construe a few verses, which we generally did by the aid of an open Bible, thus beginning our Sunday by false dealing. Such was the custom handed down ; but no long time elapsed before all this was swept clean away by the advent of a higher tone, which it was from the first Edward Thring's great aim, and ere long his great and abiding reward, to have introduced into the School.

After breakfast we had no more work ; but soon after half-past ten we were assembled to march to the parish church. The church at that time was all high pews with very narrow seats and galleries ; and we sat at the east end of the gallery in the south aisle. The benches

were very close, and carved all over with the names of our predecessors; I do not think we added many to their number; but, from my own personal observations in many places, I should say that the previous generations must have had a wonderful fondness for name-carving in all the schools of the land. Two masters sat with us, and we followed the service by the sound; for, except those in the front row, none of us could see anything of what was going on in the body of the church. When it came to the sermon, and the rector, as was usually the case, preached, from that moment we had no more hand in the matter. The rector, Mr. Dimmock, was a dear old man, but he was very aged and toothless, so a modulated noise like the wind in a pine tree, rising and falling as he began and finished his sentence, was all we could possibly hear, and not one single articulated word ever reached the gallery. This was a dreary business, and it was not improved until the School had its own services, conducted entirely by the masters in the morning before the 11 o'clock service and again in the afternoon. We then sat in the nave and could hear the sermons. These were, praise be to the sensible men who delivered them, always short—from seven to

twenty minutes. The famous seven-minutes' sermon was by the Rev. R. J. Hodgkinson, but the most striking that we ever had was one from the Rev. Duncan Matthias. Contrary to regulation, boys had been allowed by the tradesmen to 'go on tick,' that is to have goods on credit, until their debts became a terrible incubus to them, and it was resolved to put an end to the system. We had a considerable blowing-up on the Saturday, and there was hardly a boy who was not more or less in disgrace with his House Master, when Matthias on Sunday afternoon got up in the pulpit, that pulpit from which Jeremy Taylor had preached in that same church, and which I regret to see has now been moved from its traditional place, as though it were not a privilege of a high order for any of his successors in the rectory of Uppingham to preach to their congregations from the very same spot upon which that great man had stood to deliver some of his splendid sermons. Into that pulpit Matthias mounted and gave out for his text: 'Owe no man anything'; and he thereupon gave us what I can only describe as a thorough dressing-down; and, what is more, made us feel as if we had deserved it. The galleries still

remained, but we no longer sat in them, and the services henceforth were decent and impressive, the music good, and the singing hearty.

A part of our Sunday routine, and, indeed, as soon as ever Sunday Greek Testament was abolished, the only compulsory attendance out of church during the day was three quarters of an hour's practice of the hymns, etc., which took place in the School-House Hall just after morning service. After that we spent the day in taking walks, always with a chosen companion, keeping nearly always the same companion throughout the half, and sometimes for many consecutive halves. Thus we walked with A between morning church and dinner, with B between dinner and afternoon church, with C between that service and tea, and sat together with one of them, or perhaps with D, after tea. These walks were delightful. Rain interfered far less often in those days than it seems to do now, and in the course of them some of us gathered flowers which a wise offer of Dr. Thomas Bell of a prize for botany caused us to dry and to learn the names of. Never was there a prize offered which did more good ; it gave much pleasure and good employment at the time, and laid, in some boys to my certain

knowledge, the foundations of a love of flowers and an interest in botany which has lasted a lifetime, and added a charm to every year as it passed. The evenings, in summer, were often spent in the Head-Master's garden. The inimitable sermons at nine o'clock prayers, after we got two proper services in church, were discontinued.

## CHAPTER IX

### MASTERS

I HAVE said something of our masters in the old Schoolroom, and will only now add that we all, as well as many generations of boys who came after us, owe a great debt of gratitude to the splendid discipline which was kept, and the absolute accuracy in all our work which was so patiently and unswervingly enforced by the 'Usher and Sub-Warden.' Long may he live to feel our thanks. One other master I must speak of, a man who did more than any other for me personally. Duncan Matthias was a Cambridge man and a scholar, and he knew and constantly read more English literature than most school masters; and in his quick short way, drawing in a long breath through his lips, with 'Bless the boy! Have you never read *Lycidas*? Here, I'll lend it to you,' he

would make us ashamed of our ignorance, and at the same time supply us with the means of getting rid of it. And thus he would lead us constantly to fresh fields and pastures new, implanting a love for English literature and a desire for knowledge, and giving us that wider information of all kinds which a boy so readily responds to, but which so many teachers fifty years ago did not ever dream of imparting, or even of pointing the way to. Matthias taught the form next below the Head Master's, and he opened many doors, notably that of English literature, for which there are several pupils of his now who never cease to bless him 'from the depths of their grateful hearts.'

For us, as a rule, in those days, no master ever did more than hear a construing lesson in the baldest manner. No illustration was used, little information imparted; a task was set and heard, but of the author or his times, or the beauty of his language, or the excellence of his descriptions, or the humour of his characters, we heard nothing.

Now I return to the earliest times. The mention of the music-room shows that the music for which the School is, and long has been, so justly famous was fostered by

Mr. Thring from the very beginning. The first music master was Herr Schäfer, who, in addition to the dismal room off the School-House Hall, gave his lessons in a little square stone-built house on the Stockerston Road. He was a tall man who wore the usual gold spectacles, and took considerable pains with his small choir of singers and his two or three music pupils. About once a month we had what was called a drawing-room evening, a term which survived long after the choir had outgrown the capacity of the School-House drawing-room; indeed, for many years the 'drawing-room evening' had to be held in the School-House Hall, where the custom began of ladies taking part in it. The music-room then became the tea-room, and when the new schoolroom was built and the concerts transferred to it, the name of 'Drawing-room evening' was transferred with them and long held its ground. In Herr Schäfer's day the School choir could easily muster round the piano in the Head-Master's drawing-room, and the tea and cake, which was an invariable part of a 'drawing-room evening,' was laid out in the dining-room. What wonderful cake that always was! Dark and, like Good King Arthur's bag-pudding, 'stuffed well with

plums.' Mrs. Thring saw to that. She was famous for her plum-cakes, one of which was always to be found in that little square dining-room. Often have I, going in with some paper to be signed, or having been met by the Head Master or Mrs. Thring outside and brought in on purpose, been presented with a huge wedge of it, and told to take another equally large to 'the bosom,' the bosom friend with whom I first shared a study. These 'drawing-room evenings' were always looked forward to; there was no work after tea, but we went up to dress, and then at 7.30, all, whether singers or not, went to the drawing-room, and with music and cake and tea and talk spent the rest of the time till ten o'clock. It was one of the ways in which school was made to feel like home, and the ladies brought into contact with the boys, according to the principle well-known and recognised everywhere now, but which at that time was only to be found in Mr. Thring's programme of the ideal school.

Schäfer was succeeded by Christian Reimers, a genial little bull-necked man, with long hair and smiling face, and his head well thrown back as he walked, very unlike his tall, grave predecessor. He taught both music and drawing,

and combined the two arts when he set the first Uppingham School song to music. It was a cricket song, written by the Head Master, who had in him a truly poetic touch, as some of his published poems attest; and Reimers not only set this song to music, but he drew on stone an illustrated border for the full-sized music sheet on which the song was published. This lithograph is very hard to find now. The border, as far as I can remember it, showed the School House and the Church, and I think the old Schoolroom; and below were a few boys strolling or playing, and on either side were the two brothers Beevor, and not bad likenesses either, one with a bat, the other with a ball, and both with their college caps on, showing that we still wore them at that time. Certainly a copy of that song thus illustrated ought to be among the school treasures in the library; it is historic, and it is a curiosity.

Before Reimers, drawing (geometrical) had been taught to the one pupil (or was it two?) who required it by an artist who came over once a week or once a fortnight from Stamford, the teacher giving his lesson in the School-House Hall after evening prayers. I am not sure that something of the kind was not done for

German; but there was only one pupil who was tiresome enough to want to learn German. French no one wanted. Even when, in later years, it was taught it was still an extra, and I never heard that anybody ever learnt anything of the language worth mentioning. The actual value of these lessons was pithily summed up by a speaker at one of the old Uppinghamian dinners, who said, 'There was one thing about Mr. Thring, he knew very well what he *could* do and what he *couldn't*; he never tried to teach us French.' Some schools have tried undoubtedly, but how few have succeeded! Practically none, except perhaps the Naval schools, until the invention of the Army class. Yet how much better it would be for all of us if it were taught not as an extra but as a necessary part of every boy's education. Preparatory schools do something, but it was done better in the days before preparatory schools, when a boy stayed at home till he was eleven or twelve and learnt it from his sisters' governess, who taught him in a year more than any public school can teach in three.

It must be remembered that at Uppingham in the days I am speaking of there were less than forty boarders and some dozen day-boys,

and that the latter held quite aloof from extras. But the coming of Reimers soon created a drawing class, which he held in a little room in the house, which, when added to, was afterwards called the 'Red House.' Here he once said to me as he taught his drawing class, 'You learn drawing, you are half a man; you learn music, you are half a man; you learn them both, you are a whole man.' His instrument was the 'cello, and after he left us he did a good deal for music at Manchester.

His successor was a little, sharp-visaged man, quick in his movements, and a clever and enthusiastic musician, but he was not fond of boys, I think. He said that the only way to learn how to play the violin was to practise it ten hours a day for seven years, and that his idea of perfect happiness would be to live by himself high up in a tower where he could play to his heart's content without interruption.

Of other extra masters of early days I must not forget to mention the first German and chemistry master the School ever had. Dr. Benguerel, pronounced by us 'Bungarell,' and abbreviated into 'Old Bungy,' was, I think, a Swiss; certainly with a rough exterior he had the most genial manner, and he played football

most courageously. We played a game of our own, founded mainly on that of Shrewsbury with something of Rugby in it, and a good deal of running with the ball when caught either full or first bound. Mr. Hodgkinson, who always played in full clerical costume—white choker, black trousers, and tall hat, though the latter would be flung aside when he warmed to his work—was a wonderfully speedy runner at football, but Dr. Benguerel was in the thick of the fight while his wind lasted. We played one side in white, the other in red jerseys, and I can hear now the Doctor's cry of encouragement or despair when he could run no more, 'Go it, vite vons!' or 'Oh, my vite vons, my vite vons!'

He took two or three boys with him one holiday on a bird and egg collecting expedition to the Faroe Isles. They had a hard time and not a very successful one, but in describing it afterwards and how he found some rare egg or plant, he said, 'It vas all moch hard vork, but ven I heard ve should haf ze chance to make zat find, my entousiasmus vas extreme.' He never learnt to talk any better, but he was so genuine and enthusiastic that we all liked him, though his funny ways made his pupils some-

what uproarious; whereupon he would say, 'Ah, vill you talk and laugh? If you vill not be silent I vill write you in my book, my littel black book, fifty lines.' He was keenly interested in the building of the gymnasium, and used to come down and show us some things to do on the horizontal and parallel bars and the small pole. His place when he left was taken and held for very many years by Dr. Schlottman, not so keen a chemist or naturalist by a long way, and something of a recluse, which no good master ought to be of course; but as a wide reader, a deep thinker, and an accomplished man, I doubt if the staff of Uppingham masters has ever possessed his equal.

## CHAPTER X

### GAMES AND PASTIMES

I HAVE spoken of fives and football. The latter was compulsory, and only played in the afternoon; fives went on at all hours, and in the morning after second school we always played hockey, and real good games we had. There was no limit to the numbers either in football or hockey, and we played on the upper, which was the only, ground. After a hit-off from near goal everyone but the goalkeeper rushed for the ball; you had to play with both hands, so that you could not swing the stick, and if you did not play right-handed you could be 'shinned.' Some boys were really extraordinarily clever at dribbling the ball through the thickest of the fray, not passing it, but keeping it to themselves all the time. Those who had this art were always picked first. We played 'hard all,'

and used to get in half an hour as much exercise as we wanted. There were no 'sports' then; but in the short interval between football and cricket, when we went by turns to roll the field each morning, one of the amusements for the afternoon was going out jumping. For this the fields in all but the Leicester road direction were excellent, but out towards Lyddington or Stoke Dry was our favourite country. The bands were not large, about fifteen or less, as we did not wish to rouse the anger of the farmers. There was always a big boy who led the party, chose the jumps and showed the way over, and everyone followed if he could or dared. There was no compulsion, but it was astonishing how well the little fellows followed a lead, and how rapidly they improved in courage and power. It was by this means and by running with the hounds when they met near Wardley Wood that the training was got which helped a year or two later to win the steeple-chase. Mr. Tailby hunted the country from 1856 to 1878, and I am glad to see that he still rides to hounds in 1904. We really did no harm to the fences, and we only went out on the fine days about Easter when the ground was no longer sticky, under which cir-

cumstances these excursions were just a pure delight. The favourite jump was a fly with a good take-off over a ditch and fence having a drop on the further side. These abounded on the left of a road going down towards Lyddington. But the biggest jump was on the other side of Uppingham, out of a grass field on to the roadside in a corner on your right just before you begin to ascend the hill into Preston—a really huge affair.

There were toll-bars on the roads then—one at the bottom of the town leading to the Glaston Road, and one on the Ayston Road, just before the hill below which the road forks to Manton. There were two on the Leicester Road, one just before the turn to Ayston, and one three quarters of a mile further on. It had been handed down that a little round fat clergyman, who used often to bowl against us at cricket matches, had once jumped the 'Glaston Bar,' and it was a very proud moment in their lives when two of our best jumpers one year did the same, after which they soon did the other three. It was a big jump in all cases, and admitted of no half measures. If you jumped you got over, but you could not always be sure that you *would* jump. I knew

a boy who walked with a chum one day to jump the second bar on the Leicester Road, looked at it and came back again. The next day he went again and did it.

Another pastime was paper-chasing: for a boy who could run and keep it up this was quite the most enjoyable of all the sports of the year, skating alone excepted. But we had only one or two paper-chases in a year. They took us into fields otherwise unvisited, made us observant, and gave scope for all the instincts and wiles of hunters and things hunted; and we ended by feeling to have done something special and earned the extra good tea which by one means or another we always managed to secure on these occasions. Of course we all imagined and believed fifty years ago that we had run many more miles than we really had done. I suppose our estimate, to be correct, had usually to be divided by three. I see that the same weakness holds good still, and smile as I read to-day in the School Magazine of the fourteen miles that is made of a fairly straight course to Rockingham Station and back. But this is all very human. Travelling over a country on foot is a very different thing from riding over it, and the

paper-chase runner can seldom be expected to know how the same distance would feel if he were on horseback riding after hounds: the miles then shrink to something like their real proportions.

We used to walk out into the fields a good deal at all times; and one of our amusements was making dams across the little brooks, notably that which passes Brooklands; but it was cold work standing in the water, so that there were not many amateur engineers. When the warmer weather came, hunting the ponds and brooks for snails and water-newts and stickle-backs, to put into an aquarium, was a resource; and the beautiful orange colour of the newts and tritons in the breeding season was a thing worth seeing.

The end of the fifties saw the beginning of the School Athletic Sports. The first we had were held in 'Van Diemen's Land,' which was the name of the town football field, situated on the right as you went along the Rockingham Road just past the turn to Lyddington. We had 'events' in the first year for boys over and under sixteen. This was too hard upon the small boys, and next year the limit was altered to fifteen. 'Van Diemen's' was often

used in later years for football, and was good when dry (the fastest long hurdle race was run on it, which still holds the record), but it could be very slippery at times. Another field which we used for football was on the other side of the same road, not quite so far out, just at the angle of the Rockingham and Lyddington roads. The first steeple-chase was in the valley below Stoke Dry, and, unluckily, a boy broke his leg at the water-jump. Next year more boys entered, and, the jump being big, many got in; for the first two, crawling out up the clean-cut slope of the clay bank, made it so slippery that it was hardly possible for the rest to get over, since if they landed short of the bank-top they inevitably slipped back the whole way into the water. After this the course was moved to the Ridlington Valley. The first mile race was between the two toll-bars on the Leicester Road, the course being half a mile long. We used whichever road had the smoothest surface, and ran sometimes on the quarter of a mile under the beeches which go from the Manton Road to Ayston, sometimes on the last bit of road before you get to Glaston.

One pastime, which is now rather knocked on the head, was birds-nesting. Two or three

sets of boys did this with much vigour, getting bullfinches and long-tailed tits, called at Uppingham 'Bomb-barrels,' redstarts which we called 'Firetails,' meadow-pipits and writing-larks (that is yellow-hammers, so called from the scribbling marks on their eggs), and even grasshopper and garden warblers, and of larger birds, pigeons and jays, crows, magpies, moor-hens, owls, and hawks, both sparrow and kestrel. Many expeditions would be made for one kestrel or sparrow-hawk, and some real stiff climbing done for a crow or a magpie. The difficulty when you did get up of getting your hand into the nest of the latter with its huge thorny mass, and of bringing the eggs down safe in your cap or mouth, was no slight one. A small boy who could climb was always in request, one who would not be too heavy to get to the topmost branches. And to have a big boy to stand at the foot and push the small boy as far as his outstretched hands could reach was the quickest way of getting a start up the main trunk. Of course many eggs could be bought, and sometimes good ones, one or two of the lads of the town being very expert climbers and keen observers; and most of the village boys were nesters, so that you never could go down the

street without some little ruffian saying to you, 'I knaws to a jy-birds,' or offering you a thorn-bush with a 'bumbarl's' nest in all its lichened beauty. Among our rarest finds were the cuckoo, the strike, and the kingfisher. The finding of a kingfisher's nest at Stockerston Brook one year caused great excitement. Boys are always full of traditions and reports; and one that we firmly believed in was that the British Museum would give a sovereign for a king-fisher's nest, which was said to be composed entirely of fish bones, an absolute myth, of course, as the kingfisher does not make any nest; though in the hole in which she lays her eggs, fish bones, the remains of a late repast, may of course be found.

Later in the summer cricket was the one game; but even that was not so rigidly attended but that one could at times go off with a friend before half-past four call-over across the field to Stockerston Brook below Beaumont Chase, to bathe, and on still rarer occasions with a more numerous company make the longer excursion to the pool just above Thorpe Mill in the Welland Valley. For this we had to get leave to miss call-over, a privilege only bestowed if work had been good lately. It was in this clear

pool that I first had the delightful sensation of being able to swim. I had been for weeks the year before struggling to learn in the little sandy hole in the Stockerston Brook; going down either with a friend or by myself day after day till the first week of October, and though the hole was nowhere out of my depth, so that there was no excuse for nervousness, I had never managed the few strokes needed for crossing it without being conscious of a surreptitious toe always touching the bottom. Again next year I tried, but with no result. We had no one to teach us, and very few in the School could swim. And then, on that afternoon at Thorpe, striking out as usual with little hope, I found myself all at once swimming without effort. Soon after this we had a bathing-place made in the brook on the right of the Seaton Road, in the valley where the railway runs. It was in a grass field, the entrance to which was not a hundred yards past the upper ground; and though the water was anything but perfect, and always smelt somewhat of gas tar (it took its rise near the gas-works), we all used it daily, and everyone learnt to swim. It was paved in the shallow part with rough flag-stones, and shelved from two to six or seven feet in depth. What a boon

it was! And how well I recall the extraordinary pluck of one little curly-headed boy, who before he could swim a stroke would jump into the deepest part with glee if some big boy who could swim would only promise to save him.

It was in connection with this bathing-place that one of our most memorable 'rows' took place. We had for some reason an evening 'play' allowed us, and after tea we rushed off to the bathing-place intent on catching some of the little town-boys bathing in our water. Yes, there they were having a merry time. We swooped down on them, furious at their trespass, and caught and ducked some dozen; and then, in our unthinking fury, we flung some of their clothes in after them. It was a deed repented of as soon as done, when we saw the poor little fustian trousers floating on the wave; but it was repented of a deal more afterwards. I do not think I ever saw the Head Master so angry as he was when he harangued us in the School next morning. No terms of abuse were too bad for us, no words too strong to describe the cowardly meanness and insensate folly of our conduct. And we did not escape with words alone, though I forget the precise form of punishment, for, like all of its kind, it passed, as

of course all merited punishment should do, quickly from our minds, and left no trace of resentment. But the horrible unkindness of our action was burnt deep into all who had a hand in the matter. The parents were all handsomely compensated, so that even they forgave us, I believe, before long; but it had properly ruffled them you may be sure.

Winter was always desperately cold at Uppingham, which we always said caught the full force of the wind direct from the snow-clad Caucasus, there being nothing between us. But youth's blood is warm, and no fun was more exhilarating than 'keeping the pot boiling' on the slide, which we made from the entrance of the School gate right across the 'Quad' to the door leading to Leamington Terrace. To get a coat of ice on the gravelled 'Quad' we swept it well, and poured on it many jugs and cans of water overnight; and by constant attention we kept it good for days with a splendid surface; and as it was all slightly downhill, with a little switch-back rise, and then a sharp fall near the lower end, we went a great pace, and had an exciting time—soon becoming very expert, for it was no fun falling and having everyone on the top of you. We did this usually between breakfast

and ten, and work rather suffered, for that was the most terrifically busy time of the day, when verses had to be finished or repetition learnt, and a construe prepared for second school. One big boy, not high in the School, would sometimes shout out, 'There will be a construe in Hall of Xenophon (or Livy or what-not) at twenty to ten,' and when all who were concerned had assembled he would lie full-length on the table with the text and a Bohn before him, and construe aloud as much as was needed. This did not last long, as the Head Master made an appeal to all boys to give up all cribs, and not use them again, and from that date it became a point of honour to have nothing to do with them any more.

When the frost was very hard we generally made, directly after dinner, for 'Burgess' Pond,' which was in the valley to the right of the Leicester Road, about three miles out, close to where the rifle butts are now. On this big pond we all learnt to skate, and had the grandest fun, always besieging Mr. Thring, when we had got him on the pond, to give us a half-holiday, which he on his part was always quite ready to do. The 'Governors' holiday,' which was a whole holiday in honour of the 'Michaelmas

audit,' was, if fine, usually spent in making some long excursion on foot. One of these would be to Oakham. We took our sandwiches with us, and some apples, and with eighteen-pence, which was doled out to us, in our pockets, we spent the day in a real good outing—often visiting several churches, and finding always kind treatment, and often getting interesting information from the rector. We went to Deene Park sometimes; the great object of attraction there being Lord Cardigan's Balaclava charger; and many a boy found a kind host in Mr. Sylvester, who was for many years rector and chaplain there. Launde Abbey attracted some boys, and some had a curiosity to see Tugby, for no other reason than that it boasted a champion belt for pugilists, which one of our boys, who rather fancied himself as a bruiser, was very anxious to go in for. Poor fellow! he emigrated, and I think his was the worst end ever made by an Uppingham boy. A shorter excursion was to the church at Stoke Dry, to see the pretty little sacristy over the porch, and the finely-preserved tomb in the chancel with the recumbent effigies of Sir Everard Digby, of Powder-Plot fame, and his wife. The curious old house at Martinsthorpe we also visited; where the whole parish

consists of that one long, low, grey building, and the grass field in which it stands, and the Bishop's Palace in the interesting village of Lyddington, used by Hugh of Lincoln at the time when his diocese reached from the Humber to the Thames.

It was not only in the autumn that we made these expeditions; in May or June an expedition would be sometimes made to find a rare flower. The 'Gagea Lutea' was said to grow in Wardley Wood, as did certainly the toothwort, 'Lathraea Squamaria'; and in the 'Bedford purlieus,' to the North of Duddington, masses of lilies of the valley grew wild. The 'Anemone Pulsatilla,' in the old stone quarries of Barnack, was beyond our beat. Wakerley Wood was famed not only for rare flowers, but for its butterflies; but none of us collected insects, so that when we went to Wakerley it was to look for the 'Herb Paris,' the large Butterfly Orchis, and other woodland treasures.

To get to Wakerley you passed Barrowden Heath with its magnificent great cowslips growing on the strips of pasture, which were left to mark the divisions of the different holdings. Sometimes on reaching the Heath we would turn to the left past Morcott, and go to North

Luffenham to see the 'Founder's Tomb'; but if we went on and bore to the right we came to the flowery wood of Wakerley, about half-way between Wakerley Church and Fineshade Abbey, which with its comfortable mansion we always regarded as a take-in; Fineshade Abbey being a name which naturally led us to expect a fine old ivy-clad ruin. As we neared the wood we could look back and see the curve of the river Welland, and across it, standing all by itself in the ploughed fields, the curious desolate little church of Tixover. It was at the entrance to this wood that I was one day confronted by the keeper; and when I said that I had the Marquis of Exeter's permission to enter the wood, and showed him the letter, he said, speaking with the tone of a man who had been really hurt, 'Ah, that's just where it is. The Markis he is so kind that he can't say no to nobody. And my pheasants nesting and everything.'

For a really good excursion a whole holiday was the thing; but these were rare, as the præpostor's holiday was not yet invented; but a leave off call-over we could often get, and half-holidays were not infrequent. The captain of the School kept a little book in which all the events for which we could claim a half-holiday

were put down—*e.g.* the winning of a scholarship, a request from some distinguished visitor, the election of a new governor, a new batch of præpostors, the arrival of a new master, or even the birth of a son and heir to one of the masters. These events were not always allowed by the Head Master, and he would sometimes knock two of them into one; but perhaps the most frequent cause of a holiday was three selected exercises.

Among distinguished visitors Dr. Holden once got us a half-holiday; and I also remember the half-holiday which Mr. Thring's father obtained for the school on what was, I believe, his only visit to Uppingham. Accompanied by a mounted servant he arrived on horseback, having ridden from Alford in Somersetshire, and started back again two days later. So small was the accommodation, that when a visitor was at the School House any boy who was 'staying out' had to sit in the Head-Master's dining-room, and when that was occupied either in the drawing-room or study. It happened that a small boy was sitting alone in the study on the afternoon of the half-holiday, when Mr. Thring, senior, came in, asked him his name, and then said, 'You'll not be able to

enjoy the holiday to-day, so here's five shillings for you.'

Like his father, Edward Thring had all the instincts of a country gentleman, and was always fond of a good horse or dog. It tickled him immensely, years after he had taken orders, to find on going back to Alford that he was still spoken of by the tenants as 'the young squire.'

But to return to the 'selected exercises.'

If a boy in the fifth, or even in a lower form did a very good exercise, he might be sent up with it to the Head Master, who congratulated him, and signed a 'ticket' which entitled him to a half-holiday. This, as he had it all by himself, was usually spent on some kind of work: indeed, the Head-Master's theory was that half-holidays were given in order to give a boy a chance of looking up back work, and if the exams. were nearing, a good many half-holidays actually were used for that purpose, for we always used to 'swat up for exam.' If one of the upper sixth showed up a particularly good exercise, whether prose or verse, Greek, Latin, or English, the Head Master said, 'I'll select that,' and the happy author had the big MS. Book from the study, in which all the selected exercises were written, and added his composi-

tion to it. Then, when three had been selected, we could claim a half-holiday for the school, which was always given out as 'a half-holiday for the selected exercises of so-and-so and so-and-so,' two being often by the same boy, and possibly all three. That book, though not equal to the *Sabrinae Corolla*, had many very good things in it, and was of great and unique interest. It should be a much-treasured School possession; but since Mr. Thring's death it has not been seen. I always trust that it may yet be found.

I have left the great game of cricket to the last. We had but one eleven, and in that two places were filled by masters. The 'Warden' and the 'Sub-Warden' both played, as the old scoring-book will testify. Of these the former, in grey flannels, and rather voluminous thick flannel shirt, black cricket shoes, and big black wide-awake, was a sight worth seeing at the wicket, as he stood, stooping low, with his bat held horizontally, waiting for the delivery of the ball. He had a splendid eye, and was not afraid to step out to the ball; most of his runs were got on the on-side. The 'Sub-Warden' (we never used these titles, but they were made familiar to us from being printed in all the

School lists, where the title 'Usher and Sub-Warden' always seemed to us extremely funny) had a quite different style. He stood very erect, almost on his toes, with the point of his bat in the block hole, with arms stiff at the elbow, but wagging the handle backwards and forwards from the shoulder, and he hit pretty freely all round, and kept it low. Both the masters were fairly safe to get some runs. In the field Mr. Earle always took point, while Mr. Thring often bowled a curious fast underhand, learnt, I suppose, at Eton; certainly his old school friend, Witts, used to bowl much in the same style. We had no cricket pavilion at first, but soon a plain iron building was put up; the flaps which formed the front side, and were hinged at the eaves, were supported when opened by iron bracket stanchions, and so formed a verandah in front. It did duty in later years on the middle ground, and, as the old nursery rhyme says, 'If it's not gone, it bides there still.'

The only School we played at first was Oundle; but they proved useless, and the match was dropped, and for a few years we had no school match. Then we went to Rossall, but it was a long journey, and that match also

soon fell through. The Rockingham match was a great day. All the School were furnished with sandwiches for lunch, and might walk over to see it. But we did not spend much time in the field, for kind Mrs. Watson always allowed us the run of the beautiful grounds.

Rockingham Castle stands on a height, and as you pass up the steep street of the pretty little village, you find the bright cold water which comes from the limestone flowing strong into the stone trough outside the village inn. Here, after our five-mile walk, we always stopped to drink, and then went on to the grim castle gateway, and by the old yew-tree hedge up into the grounds, above which was the cricket field. These grounds were full of paths winding among the ornamental shrubs. In one place was a small pond haunted by water-fowl, and all about, for the Rockingham match came early in the season, were birds' nests, which we were strictly forbidden to touch. We always made for a certain stone basin at the path-side, in a well-planted sort of dell, through which an ever-flowing supply of water ran, pure as crystal. There was a gutta-percha cup for the use of the visitors at the Castle, but we stooped and put our lips into the cool water

and drank like fishes. Going back we would stop at Caldecott, which the rustics pronounced 'Corcott,' to see the quaint old waggoner's tomb with its stage-waggon and team carved on it, the waggon painted red and blue, and the following epitaph :

'Here lies the body of Nathaniel Clark
Who never did no harm in the light nor in the dark.
But in his blessed horses taken great delight,
And always travelled with them, both by day and by night.'

The 'taken' for 'took' is an interesting survival.

We regularly played an eleven of the neighbourhood got up by an 'old boy,' and sometimes played Stamford. A few years later we played in Mr. Stopford Sackville's park at Drayton; and I have some sort of a vision of a game played at Market Harborough, some thirteen or fourteen miles off, and to which, as to Drayton, the eleven drove in a drag. Of roving teams the first that came to Uppingham was the Free Foresters. But I must get back to earlier days. In these the Rockingham match was always the great cricket game of the year, and remained so until the institution of 'The Old Boys' Match.' This was in its first

few years a fixture of surpassing interest. To begin with, it was a two-day match, and a two-days' holiday; and apart from the interest of the cricket there was the seeing of well-known faces, and renewing of old friendships; then in the evening of the first day the two elevens and the sixth and the scorer (a much coveted post on this occasion), with the masters and their wives, all went to a truly magnificent supper in the School Hall, and in later years in the new Schoolroom, given by Mr. Thring and the masters, and managed and arranged entirely by Mrs. Thring. It really was almost on the scale of a civic banquet, this 'Old Boys' Supper,' and the memory of it lived in the School from year to year, and for the matter of that, it lives still in the memory of those who attended it. Of course such an occasion for toasts and speeches was not let slip; they invariably began with 'Our Founder: to be drunk in solemn silence'; and it was even betting that the stirring speech of the Head Master to the toast of 'Old Boys' would end with the familiar words, 'Name the name of *Uppinham*.'[1]

[1] See p. 116.

## CHAPTER XI

### ALTERED METHODS—WITH A DIGRESSION ON A SMALL BOY'S FEELINGS

THE mention of Mrs. Thring calls up the many improvements in the domestic arrangements of the School House which we owed to her. My first recollection of meals in Hall takes me back into a state of things which passed muster with our parents and grandparents, and which no one in their time dreamed of finding fault with. But what rough times they used to have! Even if he came from one of the best appointed homes in England, a boy thought it perfectly natural at a Public School only two generations ago to see the school porter come in to carve at dinner, and, pulling up his sleeves, proceed to seize the leg of mutton by the shank bone and hack off the slices with a large knife. And at the most

famous preparatory school of the first quarter of last century, one who was there as a boy, and being big and strong really enjoyed life there, in speaking to me once of the change in schools said, 'When I was at school with old so-and-so, if you came up to say your grammar and didn't know it, he didn't simply turn you or set you a punishment; he *knocked you down*. And if you got "*pessimè*" for your verses, when you went to dinner he only sent you cubes of fat, which boys used to slip into their pocket handkerchiefs and bury afterwards in the playground.' It is hardly to be wondered at that another boy at the same school, who was a clever but delicate and nervous little fellow, should have said to me once when speaking of his time there, 'The further I get from those days the more I hate that man.'

Yes, indeed, it is all very well to talk of forgiving and forgetting, but the thing is sometimes impossible, especially if the boy has felt that he has been treated with injustice. That rankles in a small boy's mind, and rather grows than diminishes with years. To take an instance from one of the days at Uppingham. A very small boy had under great provocation retaliated in a wrong and foolish manner; a

sixth-form boy hears of it and goes to the small boy's study and demands admission. The little fellow, knowing that punishment is due to him, refuses. His study is his castle. He knows that when the bell rings he will have to come out, but till then he clings to his stronghold, but with the same sort of helpless terror that a rabbit must feel when the ferret is put into his burrow. Meantime the big boy, unable to get in, after vain threats and many kicks at the door, and finding that his 'Open the door you little devil, or I'll thrash you within an inch of your life' fails in persuasive force, and that the door will not yield to blows, descends to promises of impunity. 'You won't touch me if I let you in?' 'All right.' 'Swear you won't.' 'All right.' 'Yes, but swear.' 'All right; I swear I won't, but look sharp, confound you.' The boy is a sixth-form boy, and the sixth form don't tell lies, so the little chap opens, and is at once seized by his perfidious foe, and with two or three fierce blows in his midriff his 'wind is taken,' and he is doubled up in horrid pain, gasping and incapable. The sixth-form boy had lied to him. Do you think that little fellow can ever forgive that? No, he registers a vow that when he grows up if ever he meet

that boy he'll have his revenge; and he waits. And years afterwards, when he is a big strong fellow, an athlete, and skilled in the art of boxing, he meets his early tormentor, who is quite unconscious of wrong, and the whole scene comes before him. It is *his* turn now, and he flushes, and then turns and walks steadfastly away. He will not take revenge or say a word about it; but does he forget? Does he, *can* he, forgive? Impossible.

The same care never to do an injustice is what ought to dominate every master's dealings with boys. We all know with what delight the late Archbishop of Canterbury heard of the boy who wrote of him when Head Master of Rugby, 'Temple is a beast, but he is a just beast.' Boys don't resent even the severest punishment when it is deserved, and forget and forgive most things in the readiest manner. For instance, a man once claimed acquaintance with my brother, and said to him, 'When you see your brother give him my grateful thanks. I was a dreadful young blackguard at school, and he gave me one of the biggest thrashings a boy ever had, I should think; and it was the saving of me. Tell him I owe him everything.'

But to give another reminiscence of early

days. A small boy had a friend older and higher in the School whose study was remote from his. Each Sunday night, just before the bell rang for prayers, he used to go to his friend, and they read together a few verses of St. John's Gospel. One night a master met him coming away, and asked what he was doing out of his study. The bell rang as he spoke. He said he had been to see so-and-so, mentioning the head boy of the House, and had only been two or three minutes. He said, 'Oh, nonsense; you've been up to some devilry, no doubt, and I won't have it.' And he sent the small boy up to be flogged. This in itself was an injustice, as the offence was a very venial one; but the accusation of devilry, and at that particular moment, and his refusal to hear any explanation, cut deep to the heart of that small boy, for boys have very tender feelings, and he simply *could not* forgive that master. The head boy indignantly explained the situation to him the next day, but he would not admit that he had misjudged the case, nor did he ever think of saying a kind word as a salve to the small boy's feelings, and no doubt soon forgot all about it. The boy grew up, and often had friendly dealings with the master, whom he

learned to respect and like. Still, that one bit of injustice was remembered, and was always rising up as a barrier between them, not out of any unforgiving spirit at all, but because such things are burnt so deep into the heart of a small boy that he cannot forget them.

I was speaking of the altered methods of school and the immense change that has taken place for the better within the last seventy years. Thring was all for treating boys well and giving them good surroundings. That 'anything was good enough for boys' was the very opposite of his creed. For all that, when I first joined the School we had relics of barbarism which were still to be eradicated. For instance, we drank our tea out of bowls like sugar basins, using dessert-spoons for tea-spoons, and we had only brown sugar to sweeten it. At dinner we had black-handled steel forks; and, as an illustration of how regardless of decency boys are made by being treated on the 'anything-good-enough-for-boys' principle, at dinner always the first thing we each did was to plunge our fork several times through the table-cloth to clean away the black dirt, and what Calverley calls 'The horrors that lurk 'twixt the prongs of the forks.' The

substitution of plated forks and ivory-handled knives and less coarse-looking table-cloths put an end at once to all this rough practice, and cups and tea-spoons and white sugar seemed to make the tea taste better. And these innovations we knew that we owed to the Head-Master's wife. The præpostors had their own tea-pot and their own loaf and butter, and also in winter large rounds of bread for toasting. These their fags took it in turn to make at the Hall fire, being always rewarded by a round and a lump of butter for their labours. The fire was a grand one, and after first school, the chilly nature of which made it a regular 'morning sacrifice,' everybody in the house crowded round it. Then, should a small boy have wormed his way into the inner circle, it was but human that some other small boy outside should reach a stealthy hand through and pull his trousers tight, which would result in a yell and a violent and volcanic upheaval of all the mass from the interior, and the scorched youngster would be ejected to cool his calves outside.

One great evening of the year was that on which the goose, which was the first prize for the annual gymnastic competition, was

devoured. That excellent bird, according to a fancy of the Head-Master's that prizes for gymnastics should be things that perished in the using, was always the first prize, a pork-pie the second, and a huge pot of jam the third; and in early years the goose at all events always came to be devoured in the School House.

Another great evening marked with white was the evening of the 'sixth-form supper.' This was given as a farewell banquet to those who had got exhibitions and were leaving for the University. It took place about the middle of the long half; for those who were going to the University in October always came back to School after the Midsummer holidays, and had at least six weeks in August and September before they left. This made the going away from School a great wrench, far greater than it is when you leave at the end of a half with everybody clearing out at the same time, and the holidays just beginning. The supper was held in the sixth-form room, and being supplied by Mrs. Nicholls in the School lane, it was, what all cook-shop repasts are, greasy and solid and unrefined; and Mrs. Nicholls herself with an assistant did the waiting. But it was difficult to get rid of her. How well I can remember

her appearance, with lilac sun-bonnet and white apron, as with arms stuck akimbo and protrusive front (for she had what in the words of the Psalmist goes with 'a proud look'), she would take upon herself to make a speech on her own merits, and the impossibility of the School going on without her, with a few compliments to the departing guests. This became intolerable, and the Head Master and Mrs. Thring came to the rescue and allowed the supper to be cooked in the School-House kitchen and served in Hall, where the whole thing was done as nicely as could be desired. Here again altered methods came in; and when the two halves were changed to three terms, and the exhibitioners left at the end of the summer term, the 'sixth-form supper' died a natural death.

I have used the expression 'term,' which is the word used by the Bar and the Universities: we did not, however, drop the name of 'half' even when the school year was divided into three. It is the same at Eton, where the phrase 'half' is used and also 'school-time,' but not 'term.'

Before I leave the subject of altered methods I must again refer to the feature now universal,

but which Mr. Thring was the first to appreciate at its full value, namely, the bringing the influence of ladies to bear on the life of the schoolboy. In the houses the boys saw a great deal of the family of their House Master: this was very humanising, and was a great improvement on the barrack system. It also tended to civility and good manners and to a feeling of fellowship and friendliness between boys and masters. I had an amusing instance of this some years later when a new master, who had been an Eton boy, said to me, 'I like these boys; do you know I asked a boy this morning the way and he told me.' 'Well,' I said, 'what did you expect?' 'Yes, but he told me right.' 'Of course he did.' 'Well, but we always made a point of "greening" a master, and I expected he would do the same.' 'It is the old style no doubt, but it never had any root at Uppingham under Thring.' In one respect things both there and elsewhere have not changed for the better, though this is more the fault of the times than of the schools. The papers have lately been discussing the question of school expense and boys' school allowances, and one parent would even have us believe that £15 a half is the usual

pocket-money for an Eton boy. Of course expenditure and extravagance, both national and individual, have enormously increased in the last fifty years, but I am sure that many an Eton boy gets along happily even now without that amount of pocket-money or anything like it. With us at Uppingham £1 a half for a lower boy and £3 for an upper boy was considered handsome: many had less. Even at Eton money must have had a greater value then, if any inference may be drawn from the story of one little Etonian saying to another, 'But are you certain?' 'Yes.' 'Take your dick?' 'Yes.' 'Your dying dick?' 'Yes.' 'Bet a penny?' 'Well, no.'

The altering of the halves into three instead of two made a tremendous difference to us in a great many ways. At the Midsummer break-up we used to have the prize-giving and School concert in the old Schoolroom, and we used to decorate the room partly with evergreens enlivened with paper flowers skilfully made by the ladies of the School House, and partly with the lovely flowers of June, till the whole air was faint with the scent of the laburnum and lilac. Then we had the heart of the summer for our holidays, and came back before the corn was cut.

I think that one of the advantages of these Midsummer holidays was that we returned before the harvest, and saw, while at school (for we had the free run of all the fields), the beauty of the corn-fields, and all the processes of reaping and binding, carrying and gleaning—things which add a poetry to life, and teach the observant much; and boys who have the run of the open country, all, to some extent, become observant; and then a good walk in the country can do more in some ways for a boy with eyes than twenty games of cricket or football. But though we gained this we also lost something, for we were of course never at home for the September shooting or cub hunting, which are a wonderful delight to a boy who has the chance of seeing anything of either, even if only as an interested onlooker; and what joy is more absolute and longer lasting than the joy to a boy of getting his first rabbit or wild duck?

## CHAPTER XII

### THE TOWN

UPPINGHAM, though a town, was never a town of any importance; and though we could never see anything to boast of in Oakham, whose sister school we always held in proper contempt, knowing really nothing whatever about it, yet it is certain that in my early school-days any people who knew anything of Rutland knew that it had in it an assize town called Oakham, and as a rule they knew no more. Nothing used to annoy me more during most of my school life than being asked where I was at school, because I knew that when I said 'At Uppingham,' the second question would inevitably follow, 'Uppingham? Where's that?' Latterly the remark was changed to 'Uppingham? Oh! Thring's place.'

It was remarkable that during all that early

time, whenever the Head Master gave us, as he very frequently did, a speech, or 'jaw' as we called it, notably at the end of each half, or on the occasion of any event of our school life, whether good or bad, after exhorting us to manliness and truth, and all that made what he, with almost wearisome iteration, always spoke of as 'true life,' he would end by saying that he looked forward to the time when men in any part of the world wishing to speak of the home of honour and upright living, would 'name the name of Uppinham.'

But by degrees the School got known; and when Thring moved to Borth in the seventies, and took the whole School with him, there was no name more in men's mouths, throughout the length and breadth of the land, than that of 'Uppingham-by-the-sea.'

Though we knew very little about the school at Oakham, except that they were examined at the same time and on the same papers as we were for the Johnson exhibitions, in which now and then an Oakham boy showed ahead of all, or most of us, and notably in mathematics; yet we always had a longing to see the old County Hall, and the horse-shoes of which every peer, driving through the town, was bound to give

toll. That the building was absolutely unique we did not know; and we were always disappointed to see that so many of the shoes were huge painted bands of iron made into horse-shoe shape, and not the real article from the animal's hoof. It was only on the rare occasion of a whole holiday as mentioned above that we ever went so far afield. Then, armed with sandwiches and sherry-and-water, two or three of us would start on our seven-mile walk, and get back hungry, though not much edified, but still proud of having done the walk and seen Oakham. It was a poor little place after all, but I fancy Uppingham must have been a poorer. There, we had a market every Wednesday, when the sheep were penned on the foot pavements, then made of round cobble stones, on both sides of the street from the School lane to the market place, and all over the market-place square, extending further along the street each way if the market were unusually full. A gangway was left to each front door, but the smell came in at every window, and when the sheep were gone the pavement was filthy, until the scavenger with bucket and besom had swilled and brushed it. Even then the air and the ground were both redolent of farm

stock for some time. The cattle were penned on the slope below the old Schoolroom, called the 'beast-market,' or 'beast-hill,' close to the pound, which was handy for securing the pigs which were on sale. It was not then much the custom for farmers to send stock to market by rail, so that any place in an agricultural district which had a market had a large gathering of dealers and animals all through the year; and there was no other market town nearer than Oakham or Stamford, the one seven miles north and the other twelve miles east, an impossible distance for the districts south and west of Uppingham.

Once a year a fair was held, and we were forbidden to go into the market-place; the sixth had the privilege, and the day-boys revelled in their superior freedom. They did not have many chances to 'junket over us,' as the boys at Winchester say, and with the exception of the Bell family, who were beloved by everybody, and the sons of the curate Solbe, they did not catch-on with the regular boarders altogether.

But though we could not visit the market except in a furtive and fugitive manner on fair days, we got something out of it. A toll was collected

by the head boy, and the money, no great sum, was laid out by the præpostors in oranges, nuts, and gingerbreads, which were then scrambled, a certain portion being reserved for consumption in the sixth-form room. The præpostors stood on the flag-stone path between the School gate and the Hall door, and threw the oranges and the bags of nuts and gingerbreads to the rest of the House, who stood expectant in the Study 'Quad'; and this was called 'fairings.'

It would not be unnatural to suppose that the town was proud of its School; or at all events, as it grew in numbers, and trade of all kinds kept increasing, that the tradesmen would recognise that it at least had its uses. But it was not so. The farmers and publicans spoke of 'them dratted scholars,' and the tradesmen would, with few exceptions, say that the School was nothing to them, and that they were best without it. This kind of jealousy is not unknown in other places. I once heard a tradesman in Oxford say, 'Oh, sir, you should see Oxford in the Long Vacation, *when it is no longer in the hands of a clique*.' At Uppingham this feeling came to a head at the time of the Borth exodus, which lasted long enough to stop all such nonsense, and made the welcome back very

genuine; and the feeling from that time began to be cordial enough. But in the fifties there was no love lost between town and school, and a collision with 'the cads' or a chevy from a labourer in the fields was a common thing. We were always easy to tell by our caps. This at first was the 'mortar-board,' which, though so comfortable and becoming a thing for a man, is nothing but a horrid nuisance to a small boy, and was abolished partly because the Head Master considered that it was such a dangerous missile weapon. The board of ours was made generally not of wood, which is light, but of heavy mill-board; two ribbons crossing, and going from corner to corner, was a sign of mourning, and the præpostors alone had tassels, so that to take away a tassel was like cutting off an officer's epaulets, a visible and dramatic sign of degradation; and whenever one boy was pursuing another, if he could not quite catch him, he took off his cap and hurled it with force at the retreating foe. If this failed to bring him to, he generally had a fives-ball to follow up with. After this missile cap was abolished, the red badge on the black cloth cap equally gave us away, and exposed us to a hunt across the fields or a stone hurled with un-

pleasant precision if the enemy thought that the odds were in his favour. Things are very different now; but in those days we had to keep together in going out to private work after dark. The worst time, however, and as a rule we brought it on ourselves, was in winter when there was snow. Then a 'fight with the cads' was the proper constitutional thing, and we fought with some fury, more especially when we found they were not fighting fair, but were putting stones into their snowballs. They generally lined the churchyard railings, and fired at us from above as we came from the School 'Quad' or the market-place. These combats were of course forbidden. I remember once, when we had been skirmishing in the market-place, a cry was raised of 'cave,' and we dispersed in all directions; but one small boy, rushing down the hill between the rectory garden and the churchyard, looking back now and again as he ran, came full tilt into the arms of someone who had appeared round the corner of Leamington Terrace, and looking up at his 'Hulloa! hulloa!' found himself in the embrace of the Head Master, who, however, disdaining such small game, thrust him aside and continued his pursuit up the hill.

## CHAPTER XIII

### OLD FOLK AT UPPINGHAM

THAT education, among the many dubious blessings it has brought, has killed out originality all over the country is a fact which we must sadly admit. It is rare now to find a 'character,' and if there is one it is generally an old person. But on looking back, I cannot help thinking that Uppingham had in it fifty years ago more quaint persons than most places of its size. Doubtless all the villages round had some old people who were amusing to listen to: such, for instance, as the old woman at Great Easton, near Caldecott, who, on being told of the death of the Pope, said, 'Dear me, you don't say so! Pore man! So sad, too, for his pore wife and family!' To begin with the tradesmen. There were two watchmakers, whose names, oddly enough, were Flint and Sparkes. Of

these, Flint wore a white tie, was an elder of the Nonconformist Church, and spoke with a most approved snuffle, and when you asked him what you had to pay for the new glass or hands to your watch, he always answered, 'I sh'll charge you a shulln'; whilst Sparkes, who looked of a sporting turn, wore a black beard and big gold watch-chain, fastened always to the bottom button of his waistcoat, and always had his hat on in the shop, stammered so badly that his answer to the same question as to price invariably was, 'A sh—, a sh—, a sh—, *fifteen-pence.*' John Hawthorn, the bookseller, was a man who for thirty years never seemed to get a day older. His dapper body and keen face, and the eye-glass and the twinkle of his eye, to say nothing of his singular walk, with bent knees and huge strides, like the melo-dramatic brigand on the stage, as also his invariable good temper, his knowledge of books, and the immense interest he took in the School and all that belonged to it, are still sadly missed by many generations of Uppingham boys. The School Magazine, in its inception, owed very much to his kindly care and labour.

Mr. Dean, the old seedsman, with his good-looking and friendly wife, were a couple who

dearly loved a gossip whether with boys or masters. She was full of humour. All the ladies used to go and see her, and everybody was fond of her. He went about always clad in a tall hat and a swallow-tail coat, as befitted one who was Parish Clerk and lived within the shadow of the steeple. Passing under the arch by his shop and through the inn yard behind, you came out on a little island of buildings on the east of the beast-market. A road ran all round it, and at the further end of the little narrow block was a very humble shed, in which worked an industrious basket-maker called Spink. We went constantly to him to get single-sticks, though his shop was out of bounds, and he had plenty of racy talk, during all of which he never got off his low seat on a heap of willow shavings or stopped weaving for one moment.

Coming from his little cabin, we passed the old schoolroom and the churchyard with its row of limes, and on our right where the path-way turns up to the church porch we often looked at the little gravestone with its boldly cut inscription which still preserves the memory of a man I should like to know more of, one who, like Edward Thring, was in his day a

benefactor of Uppingham. The stone tells all that I know of him, and I have some doubt whether it was the rights of the people or a place that he was interested in; anyhow the inscription runs thus:

'Here lies John Beavor, that honest man
Who stood up for the common of Uppingham.
Died Nov. 11, 1682.'

Passing down the churchyard steps to the London Road, you see below you on your left, on the slope of a hill, the School workshops, which for a time had their home in the old schoolroom, now used for a drawing studio. The building where these workshops now are used to be in our time the Chequers Inn, and was turned into a music-house, where there was a sort of rabbit warren of small rooms, each holding a piano, all of which might sometimes be heard going at once. Thring, who loved the Lake District, and spent many summer holidays at Grasmere, aptly named his School garden from the beautiful mountain by Rydal, 'Fairfield,' and with still more humorous aptness gave the house of pianos built on the edge of the steep approach to Uppingham the name of 'Scale Hill,' which is the name of the well-

known steep approach to Lowes Water. A French class-room was made out of the basement of this building some years later.

Adjoining 'Scale Hill,' with a little garden in front of it, was the house of Mr. and Mrs. Mould. He was a plasterer by trade, a tall, gaunt man of cultivated appearance, and always seen in a white apron and a black satin stock. He looked as if he belonged by right to the Quaker settlers in New England and the days of William Penn. His wife had her sister Mrs. Dean's good looks in even more abundant measure. Often would we, little boys as well as big, turn in to sit by her cosy fire whilst her bright-eyed little daughter Polly would be on her knees polishing the brass rail of the fender or tidying up the hearth. Everything was kept in the pink of condition in that snug little parlour. As years went by the little girl grew up to be the belle of the place, and to marry, and then come back ere long as a widow to her mother's old home, where she would take a master for a lodger; always as much as possible identifying herself with the School, and always, with her neat figure and bright face, giving a hearty welcome to the Old Boys whom she had seen in her mother's parlour from her earliest

days as Polly Mould, and to the many Uppingham boys she had known and chatted with since as Mrs. Sellars. And thus through many generations of boys she continued, living in the little stone-built cottage, past whose door several times each day the tide of School life ebbed and flowed.

Next door lived, and live still, another couple who were equally good friends to a small school boy on a winter's day. William Hales and his wife, the latter for so many a year a picture of rosy-cheeked youth, and the former always able to give and take the schoolboy's joke with humorous repartee. He was the tailor who trimmed our studies with green baize, made our flannels, and mended and cleaned our suits. He usually sat cross-legged on a table at the window, with a nod for all who passed by. How often have I warmed my hands at Mrs. Hales's fire with thankfulness! A nice expression of his lingers in my mind when on asking him to copy a waistcoat for me, he said, 'It is a plan which I *abominably hate*, making anything by a pattern; I like to work to measure.'

The next door was a dame-school, kept by Mrs. Manton. It has now been added to

William Hales's house, and forms his shop. Into this school it was the delight of a funny fellow in the School House, a Welshman, and with a genuine Welsh name, to go and, by the hideous grimaces at which he was an adept, to frighten the small class into tears. Next door to this was Joe Manton's shop and forge. He was a locksmith, a clever fellow who could fit a gun up or make the parts of a working steam engine better than anyone in the town. Passing from him, and going through the 'Quad' to the School lane, we came to the real genuine blacksmith. Old Joe White was a typical man of the forge and stithy; the picture in Longfellow's poem fits him to a nicety. A huge bulk with massive arms and grey hair curling round a red face shining with 'honest sweat,' and always clad in leathern apron and with shaggy bosom open to the air. He was not a man of many words, but he towered above his clever son Charley as Polyphemus did over Ulysses. He lived next door to the forge and opposite to the tuck-shop where Mrs. Nicholls held sway for many a year, dominating all the School in a manner only surpassed by that in which she lorded it over her husband. Certainly she was a very capable woman. Peace to

her ashes! One house we have passed over, the last as you came up the School lane, the door of which opened close to the School 'Quad' gateway.

But before speaking of the inmates of that corner house which faced both the School lane and the 'Jetty,' I must say a word about another character; for just at the corner of the house, and within a yard of the School gateway, through which he never passed, stood every Saturday (allowance day), and in the fruit season daily, a tall man in corduroys and a cat-skin waistcoat who came from Bisbrook, that little village of orchards, north-east of Uppingham, where once on a time Blomfield, Bishop of London, as a young man, did the duty. His business was to sell fruit, and a very good business it was too. He was strictly honest, and his recommendation of his wares was peculiar to himself. 'Try this, sir. This is a Bergamy peer; a'most melt i' your mouth,' or 'That's a good plum, sir, that is; the best as grows; that's a *Marnium Bonium* plum.' Whence he got his name of 'Magnum Bonum,' having been previously known to us only as 'Bisbrook.' Under what name he was known to the police I never heard.

Inside the house by which 'Magnum Bonum' stood with his baskets dwelt an elderly, spare man, always clad in tight breeches and gaiters, with a waistcoat more than half-unbuttoned, and a shepherd's plaid scarf round his neck, who rejoiced in the name of Dams. He was ostler at the White Hart, and I believe that the White Hart dogcart, driven by Dams, and the Falcon fly, driven by Bob or Charley Knight, were, with the exception of sundry tradesmen's carts, which we made use of at the beginning and end of the half, the only vehicles to be got in the place, outside of the Manton and Seaton 'bus.

It was always considered the stylish thing to travel by Dams's dogcart, but there were at first so few of us that the whole Seaton contingent at the end of the half used to go down on one 'bus. What a joy that used to be! The nearest thing to the methods of the old coaching days that was ever vouchsafed to me. We always started at 6.30, from fourteen to eighteen of us, and drove, with shouts and volleys of peas, through the half-waked street, singing snatches of songs as we rolled along, such as 'Three jolly post-boys' and 'He's a jolly good fellow' (always sung in honour of Thring), and one song in particular, of which mention is made

in Du Maurier's *Trilby*, but which I have never heard since those early home-goings on the Seaton 'bus in the fifties. It ran thus :

'Vive le, vive le, vive le roi,
Vive la, vive la, vive la reine,
Vive le, vive le, vive le loi,
Et vive la compagnie.'

It went to a tune of its own, with a good swing, and a high and prolonged note at the end of the third line, the two first words being always pronounced 'vīvŏlă.' The 'bus set us all down at the Seaton inn, a dragon of some sort (green, I think, or it may have been S. George and the dragon), and there we all had a rare good breakfast, which was ready for us, and which we had ample time to devour before we ran off down the hill to the train. How welcome that hot coffee was ! and the steaks and the mackerel. As far as I remember, there was always mackerel. The head boy ordered it and collected the half-crowns : and a very wise plan it was, for though we were forbidden to enter public-houses, we were so excited always that we could have hardly swallowed a mouthful of breakfast at the School House before starting. No doubt it could have been had there for the asking, had we been content to start at a reason-

able hour, but the early start was part of the fun. How the Manton boys fared I don't know, but they did not go off so early.

Now to return to Dams. In his cottage there lived an aged dame, whom we called Mother Dams. Whether she was his wife or his mother I do not know, but though she did not often come outside her door, I did once find her there in talkative mood, when she gave me some quaint reminiscences of the days she had known before Dr. Holden's time. She said in old days (which I took to mean either in Dr. Butterton's time or in Dr. Buckland's, who was Head Master 1824-1839) she used to work at the 'Hospital,' 'and there was rough doings then, to be sure. On the last night of the half they used to let down the beds; that's what they used to call it.' 'What do you mean?' I said; 'cut the strings?' 'No; lift 'em up, and then let 'em all go at once; they used to make a noise like thunder. You see they was these great old heavy oak bedsteads, big 'uns too, they slep' three in a bed; and they used to lift 'em up at the foot and then let 'em all fall together, on purpose to make a noise.' I wish I had enquired more fully about this, and I have often wondered if any of those old oak bed-

steads still exist in any of the Uppingham cottages. The 'three in a bed' too. How long ago it sounds! And then to think that one should have talked with a person who knew and saw and heard these things; and that these mediæval habits were with us less than a hundred years ago! But one-half of the world know so little how the other half lives, that in England to-day, especially in the northern and western regions of it, a state of things may still exist which takes us back to at least pre-railroad days. To give an instance from each region. When I once accompanied some Cumberland artisans to a Paris exhibition, and, after the first night there, asked them how they had fared, one of them answered, 'First-rate; it was most comfortable,' adding, with wonder in his tones, 'and we had a bed a-piece.' Of course when farmers in the West country rode a long distance to the towns for market, they expected to be put up close together, and do so still; and it halved the expense. I used to hear a Cornish tale of how in the night a man was waked by hearing a noise of something falling on the floor, and, looking out from the edge of a high bed, said, 'Holloa, what be up to, then?' 'I bin and falled off, and can't find the way back.'

'Oh, bide where ye be, my dear man! bide where ye be! You might fall furder.' There was always a tradition that in Dr. Butterton's days the numbers of the School had reached a hundred, and if so, there being only that one house for boarders, some such method of sleeping might well have been a necessity.

I only saw Dr. Butterton once, at the opening of the new Schoolroom, I think, when he made a very querulous speech, and seemed to think that sufficient honour for the excellence of Uppingham had not been given to him. And though he did nothing to help the School out of the Grammar School rut in which it had always run, it only requires a glance at the School Roll between the years 1839 and 1846 to see that he was successful beyond the average as a Head Master.

## CHAPTER XIV

### OLD FOLK—Continued

The characters I have still to recall were of the less respectable sort, as a rule, and most of them only street or highway acquaintances. Of the former kind were the singular family who lived near the back entrance of the Falcon yard. This inn was not always celebrated for its comfort and excellence; I once heard a parent say that he had spent a night there on 'a bed stuffed with bottles,' and when he asked for something to eat, they brought him 'a dead fowl on a plate.' But what we visited Mrs. Chapman's house for was the excellent muffins and pikelets which she used to make. The house did not look inviting, but the thick iron slab on which she baked her wares was always in working order, and the result was excellent, especially as they would toast them

for us at the School-House kitchen. There was a little buttery hatch in the kitchen door through which we passed them with our name on a bit of paper. Mrs. Chapman had once been a bright good-looking little body, but she was the mother of twenty children, the biggest of whom used to make his living to some extent by bird-nesting and poaching and any out-of-door rascality he could find to turn his hand to. Chapman père was a typical 'Eccles,' the good-for-nothing, sententious, and drunken father in the play of *Caste*, tall and thin, with a yellow beard, and always dressed in a black frock-coat and old top-hat. He disdained doing any kind of work, and his wonderful little wife kept the whole family—the father giving you to understand at times, as he sat smoking by the fire, that 'this was not the kind of thing he was used to,' and going off whenever he could get a copper or two, 'to drink as a gentleman should.'

Two other women were among the notorieties of Uppingham. They were perfectly respectable and quite harmless, but both were crazy. No day ever went by without our seeing 'Mad Fanny,' passing rapidly up or down the street and generally pursued by one

or two little street boys, on whom she would now and again turn, muttering to herself and her face glowing with indignation. Her refined features and the locks of grey hair for ever escaping from her gaily-decked bonnet, her short scanty clothing and poor thin legs, were a pitiful sight, and I believe that a pathetic story attached to her. The other lady lived in a little stone-built house on the foot-path side of the Stockerston Road just past Fairfield. She never went out of doors, and none of us had ever seen her, on which account rumour was all the more busy with her. Once, in a spirit of intrepid investigation, a boy from the School House entered the garden gate and went up to the house and asked for a drink of water. Whilst some one was getting it, he saw the great mystery. She was sitting in the doorway of her room so as to get the air, a short, stout, ordinary-looking person, dressed in a gown of rather brilliantly patterned bedroom chintz, and with a pasteboard crown on her head. She gave the frightened boy to understand that she was Queen Victoria, and that he might kiss her hand. He was not quite prepared to do homage, and indeed retired so precipitately that before the water came he was gone.

There were three or four men whom we never liked to meet in street or field. One was a dark gipsy-looking lad, who generally led the 'cads' against us in snow-balling engagements. He was a lad of great strength and courage, and rejoiced among his fellows in the name of 'The Bloody Barstard' (the letter r in the first syllable always strongly accentuated). It is a name which sounds like a character out of some mediæval romance, or recalls the 'Bluidy Jock' of the *Border Ballads*; and though we did without the adjective, he was known to us as 'The Barstard' and by no other title. Another terror, because we seldom saw him except when drunk, was the town scavenger, always dressed in an odd assortment of borrowed clothes, who went by the name of 'Billy Noel,' a title which he had gained when canvassing for one of the Gainsborough family at a county election. He had the visage of a 'Quilp' and the 'mighty scare-babe voice' of the old Peterborough grave-digger; and when he lunged across the street at a passing small boy, he undoubtedly made that small boy skip.

In the fields the man we most had to avoid was a grazier and cow-keeper, with very ruddy cheeks and a bushy black beard, who was an

industrious good sort of man if he was let alone, but he could not stand chaff; and having once lost his temper and hurled a bill-hook at a boy which missed the boy but hit his own dog, he was ever after known as 'Kill-dog,' a name which it was not safe to use to his face unless you were some little way off, or on the other side of the fence. When in a civil mood he would only hurl long words at you, as "Would you please to confine your darned peregrinations to the foot-path." The Ayston Road was his beat; but in the opposite direction, by Stoke Dry and Caldecott, was a farmer who really set himself for many years to worry the School and, by the use of the most furious threats, to keep us all away from any land of his. Farmer Peach had the proper bullet head and big round rubicund face which enabled us to spot him at a considerable distance; and we never wanted to get any nearer. The animosity of the tenant farmers was eventually appeased by the wise plan of offering a fifteen or twenty-pound silver medal and prize in name of the School to the exhibitor of the best beast at the annual Oakham Cattle Show; and our delight was great when the kindliest and best of all the farmers in the neighbourhood, Mr. Wortley

of Ridlington, was declared the winner. We all went to see the show and often walked to his farm, and were glad that we were able to forsake old Peach's side of the country and run the steeple-chase in the valley below Mr. Wortley's.

In Uppingham itself there were a pair of brothers, twins I believe, and so alike that we never could tell them apart, who were a survival of the old posting days. Every now and then we saw a carriage with a postillion dash up to or out of the Falcon, and take the road towards Seaton or Lyddington, bearing Lord Cardigan home to Deene after a day's hunting with Mr. Tailby's hounds. He was an interesting personality to us because of his share in the Light Cavalry Charge at Balaclava. And the horse which bore him through that storm of shot and shell, and which he leapt over the Russian gun at the end of it, was to be seen for many a year enjoying a well-earned holiday at Deene. It was a little fiery thoroughbred of a dark chestnut hue, looking very small for such work and for such a weight, but it is blood, not size, that tells, and when did you ever see a big Arab? His lordship was a man of as fiery temper as his horse, or more so, and if you happened to be near the

Falcon when he wanted to start home, and the post-boys were not ready, you might hear some language which for flow and quality it would not be easy to surpass. Those two Falcon post-boys, Bob and Charlie Knight, were the living representatives of the immortal Sam Weller, with little wizened bodies, but alert and capable when sober. They had a humorous twinkle and a fund of smart repartee which made them excellent company; and the stories they told of adventures on the road and of feats of driving we were never tired of hearing; but their language, under certain conditions of drink and temper, rivalled even his Lordship's.

I have left to the last a description of the man who was certainly the most noteworthy of all the old characters of Uppingham. Tom Bradley was, I think, the most remarkable of all the 'vagrom men' I ever knew. He was tall and thin, and with no teeth left, so that his chin wagged as he spoke, and his words came with a muffled indistinctness. He always wore a tall hat and a black silk neck handkerchief. He was very poor, his office being that of rag and bone collector; and his hollow cry of 'boons, owd boons' was to be heard daily. He always carried an old sack on his back and

a stick in his hand, and always looked weak and weary and hot, but he would brighten up when he talked with you, speaking with great earnestness always and emphasis, and expressing himself like an educated man. He had studied mathematics and astronomy, and the latter study was an unfailing solace to him. A man who studies the stars has always something to take him out of himself, and I heard only the other day of a poor cripple in the streets of Paris who was pushing himself along on a board with low wheels; he had no legs and only one arm, and a gentleman said to him, 'So crippled as you are, would it not be better for you to die?' and he answered, 'No, I have my eyes, and whilst I can see the stars there's something for me in life, and I can even be happy.' A brave reply. And so with poor old Tom. We would say to him, 'Tom, you've done some mathematics, haven't you?' 'Mathematics, yis; arithmetic and algebra too.' 'Have you done fractions?' 'Ay, fractions and fluxions too.' And if you gave him paper and pencil he would work you out a sum in proof of his statement. I once came on him in Gypsy Lane, which joins the Stockerston and Rockingham roads; he was resting by the

wayside, and I asked him about his study of astronomy; he at once plunged into the subject with avidity, and speaking of the distance of the stars, he said, 'I'll tell you now how you may judge for yourself. You know that light travels at the rate of hundreds of miles a second; well now, I have done it, and you can do it yourself; you take your stand just before sunrise, with a watch in your hand, and wait for the sun to show; and directly you see him, look at the watch and count the seconds till you see your own shadow, and that'll be the time the light has taken to reach you. If you could only get up high enough you could calculate how far the sun is from the earth. He is ninety-one millions of miles away. It's wonderful, that it is! "Wonderful are thy works, O Lord!"' He would talk in this way, a mixture of sense and nonsense, with the greatest earnestness, and get quite excited, and then he would turn and bid you good-day and trudge on his way. He never dreamt of begging, and he always seemed to me to deserve an easier life. His history I never learnt, but he was a unique and singularly interesting figure of the Uppingham of those days.

## CHAPTER XV

### GROWTH

THE memories I have recorded are mainly of the School in the fifties, the old 'Grammar School' or 'Hospital,' when things were only just beginning to move. When once they began, with the exception of the one brief set-back mentioned above, it was all one flowing tide of increasing numbers, both of boys, masters, houses, playing-fields, and everything; and so fast did the tide of prosperity flow that, with hardly any exception, all the building which was done under Mr. Thring was accomplished in the fifteen years between 1856 and 1871.

The water-works, the swimming-bath, and the School fives-court came a little later, as did also the sanatorium. New houses were the first essential, but the greatest bit of building was of course the Chapel and Schoolroom.

The building of the Chapel stopped altogether for some time, and green weather-stains began to colour the stone-work inside and out. The reason of this cessation was that Mr. G. E. Street's clerk of the works was so vigilant that the first contractor was quite broken by the job. The road to the station was choked for days by timber waggons taking back the beams and roof-timbers which he had condemned; and when the Schoolroom slates were put on, the Head Master himself one day pointed out to me a large area of naked board on the east slope of the roof equal to about one-third of the whole surface, and said, 'Do you see that? That represents the amount of slate which the contractor intended to bag by scamped work, not making the slates overlap to the specified distance. Just now he is not exactly calling down blessings on the head of Foxton.'

Charles Foxton, when he had done us this good service as clerk of the works, took up his abode here as teacher of carpentry and turning in the workshop which was formed out of the old Schoolroom; and thus set going that excellent work for boys' fingers and brains which was one of Thring's especial delights, and which has never ceased to attract boys since.

Under the present Head Master it flourishes with undying vigour: and as the School has increased under his energetic rule to over four hundred, a whole set of new houses has come into existence. A new Head-Master's house, new class-rooms, and a fine laboratory and lecture-room for science have been built; a new gateway and porter's lodge faces the High Street, and the old Head-Master's house has become a beautiful library. Electric light has been introduced; the aviary, which was Mr. Thring's pet amusement at Fairfield, has been improved and added to, while the music, which in Mr. David's hands has long been brought to such a pitch of excellence, will ere long be fittingly accommodated in the new 'David' Concert-Room. New rifle butts are erected, and the whole School is taught to shoot (here again Uppingham leads the way), while a new and less rough-and-ready gymnasium is soon to be added to the School equipment. Lastly, a magnificent new water supply, with pumping-station and filter-beds in the Welland Valley, has just been added to that which had been set going in the seventies, but which was found to be no longer adequate, and could not be made so.

This, again, is a good deal to have been produced in about fifteen years, but πλέον ἥμισυ παντός, it was easier to go on than to begin, still few things in the world of education are more noteworthy than the creation of Uppingham as it now is, in fifty years, from so small a beginning.

## CHAPTER XVI

### OUR FOUNDER

It will be seen from the previous chapters that Archdeacon Johnson, of pious memory, was the Founder of the Grammar Schools and Hospitals of Oakham and Uppingham. The founder of Uppingham, the Public School, the Uppingham we know and are proud to belong to to-day, was Edward Thring, whose work is being so ably carried on and enlarged by the present Head Master, the Rev. Carus Selwyn, D.D.

But 'Memories' pertain to the past, and not to the present, and I must end as I began with reminiscences of Edward Thring, for throughout all our time at School he dominated our life in everything. In the early days we saw more of him, and he personally knew everyone—as he did, indeed, to a marvellous extent when the School had grown to its full size—for he was at

first House Master, as well as Head Master, to every one; and though nothing could be more genial than he was as House Master and friend, he had as Head Master the power of inspiring an awe which made a lower boy almost tremble to approach him in class, and to get up before him to construe was an ordeal only to be matched by the inexpressible relief of sitting down again without having made an obvious fool of yourself. But I think the most dreaded interview, and it was not unfrequent, was when you went to his study for a 'paternal.' If you had been getting careless or giving trouble, and not doing yourself credit, he sent for you and spoke to you 'as a father,' appealing to your better feelings and your love for those at home, and reminding you of your good resolutions all thrown to the winds. He spoke with intense feeling, and invariably moved you to tears; but you came away feeling that there was some good in you, and that he had recognised it, and a fresh start was made easy.

As one got bigger the terror of standing up in class of course departed, and you knew him more and more as a teacher and friend. Besides his remarkable personality he was noticeable in many ways. His powers of invention

seemed unlimited, his cleverness with his fingers was very great, no one ever sharpened a cedar pencil so beautifully as he did, and the skill he attained in wood-carving after a very few lessons was phenomenal. His activity, as shown by his fives-playing, was our constant admiration. His energy was infectious; whatever he took in hand he went at with such a will. His originality, whether in teaching or in conversation, was very remarkable; but what to us boys seemed his greatest attribute, next to his absolute fairness, was his dauntless courage. No obstacle was insuperable to him; he was often obstinately determined; indeed there is an unmistakable ring of truth about the story that when he was being examined before the Public Schools' Commission, and one of the members said to him, 'But, Mr. Thring, that would only be running your head against a brick wall,' he replied, 'Precisely what I intend to do, my Lord.'

This combativeness, which was so eminently characteristic of the man, we knew little of; and, similarly, that he should be always wrapped up in Uppingham seemed to us but natural, though as years went on, and he got more and more engrossed in his life's work, his early friends often complained that in conversation he had

but one horse to ride, and its name was Uppingham. He had the greatest possible respect for those in authority, especially for the Lords Spiritual, for, as he used himself to say, in all Church matters he was a 'Hebrew of the Hebrews'; but where Uppingham and his life-work was attacked he was ready to fight the whole bench of Bishops—as, for instance, when the Bishop proposed to subordinate the School to the town, and give the School their confirmations in the Church instead of the Chapel, he resisted with the utmost vigour and freedom of speech, and, as he phrased it, 'beat him.' Later, when the Bishop was lying very seriously ill at Stoke Dry, he went over to see him, and the reconciliation which ensued was a genuine pleasure to the Head Master, which it was quite touching to hear him speak of.

All his friends dearly loved him; he awakened a strong and lasting affection in them, which he equally reciprocated. His feeling for his aged mother, who lived to be over ninety, was quite beautiful, and his voice always grew tender whenever he spoke of her. Another characteristic of Edward Thring was his absolute sincerity and the intense seriousness which he put into each daily religious function. His

mind was deeply imbued with religion, which he carried into each detail of daily life. I think I never knew a man who so thoroughly lived his religion. The way in which he prepared us for confirmation was a thing never to be forgotten; and the deep humility of his attitude in matters religious was a marked contrast to his commanding and almost assertative manner as a leader of men. Finally, he was the most human of men, delighting in giving pleasure to others. Often at the time when the plums were ripe I have known him call boys into his garden and shake the trees with glee, bringing down large showers of great purple and yellow fruit, and taking, I think, even more delight in it than we did, which is saying a good deal; but his love of doing kindnesses was really boundless. In the holidays he was absolutely full of fun and genial good-nature. This is a part of his life which his biographer unfortunately knew nothing about, and the constant money worries, which are so lengthily dwelt upon by him, are forced into far too great a prominence—which seems to prove that a man's own diary is not always the best source from which to make a true picture of him as his friends knew him.

I have said that he founded the Head-Masters' Conference.[1] And that was not the only thing his inventive mind originated. A School gymnasium and a carpenter's shop were some of his contributions to English Public School education. In these things he has been followed by all the Schools, which is, however, not the case with his great principles of a study for each boy and a class of not more than twenty-five for each master, so that no master should have more boys than he could really teach. He even carried the principle further and limited the School to three hundred, as he said that a Head Master ought not to have more masters under him than he could effectively control. 'Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?' was a favourite quotation of his.[2] And besides all this, Thring was the first to turn the enthusiasm of youth into the channel of Mission work, and to connect a special Mission with the School. At first it was in the diocese of Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, that the Uppingham Mission had its home; after a time it was brought back to

[1] In 1869.

[2] For further remarks on Thring's political foresight, see Appendix III.

England and located in the East End of London, where it was possible for Uppingham boys and masters to pay it occasional visits, and whence the Missioner, who was usually an old Uppingham boy, could come and give the School an annual account of his work. North Woolwich and Poplar have at different times been the chosen fields of labour, and the work has never flagged. The example set by Thring at Uppingham has been followed by many Public Schools and by the Universities, and in all cases the benefit of the work is felt to be, like Mercy, 'twice blessed: it blesseth him that gives and him that takes.'

Though after many years of fighting and struggle Thring was at times weary and disappointed, insomuch that he once astonished me by saying, 'If I could afford it, I would gladly leave Uppingham to-morrow,' he still kept within him, what in all his early years his friends knew so well and so constantly wondered at, a boy's heart. The infectious bursts of merriment may have become fewer, but one boyish trait he never lost. All boys are hero-worshippers, but none ever came up to him. His heroes were many and various; and naturally, with us who came under the

spell of his strong personality, and had the vision of his strenuous and religious life always before us, his example was contagious. Well for us if we were able, with half his thoroughness, to live up to his own chosen motto, 'Ora et labora.'

How greatly he influenced the boys of his sixth form may be judged from the fact that throughout our University life and later, if we had any doubts as to what our course of action should be on any particular occasion, we did not say to ourselves, 'What would my father think?' but we asked ourselves, 'What would Thring say?' and the answer was always clear at once.

# APPENDIX I

## THE OLD FOUNDATION

ROBERT JOHNSON was born in 1540 and educated at Peterborough Grammar School, lately set up by Henry VIII. on the dissolution of the Monasteries. Thence he went to Clare and afterwards to Trinity College, Cambridge, and, having obtained a fellowship there, travelled abroad 'by license under Queen Elizabeth's own hand,' and studied in Paris. He became on his return Chaplain to Sir Nicholas Bacon at Gorhambury. He appears to have been at one and the same time Canon of Peterborough, Norwich, Rochester, and Windsor, and to have been made in 1591 Honorary Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, and Archdeacon of Leicester. In 1574 he became Rector of North Luffenham, which he held for half a century, dying there on July 24, 1625.

In 1584 he founded two 'free Grammar Schools,' at Oakham and Uppingham, and two Hospitals, called 'the Hospitals of Christ,' of which that at Oakham was the resuscitation of an old Hospital founded by Henry Dalby in Henry V.'s reign, the lands and buildings of which he purchased from Queen Elizabeth. He built the old Schoolroom at Uppingham for the free Grammar School and the old School House for the Hospital, which was to contain fourteen poor men 'and one woman to wash their buck clothes,' and he appointed a School Master at a stipend of £24, who was also to be Warden of the Hospital, for which he received a further £6. Under him he appointed an Usher and Sub-Warden or Confrater at just one half these stipends, who was to 'read prayers at least twice in the week with the poor people.' The Head Master was to 'have his habitation' in the Hospital building. Rather more money was paid to the Hospital than to the School Master and Usher, but the School had some small exhibitions to the University, which were considerably enlarged by his will on his death; and the Head Master might charge certain small fees to all boys not belonging to the town, sharing the proceeds with the

Usher. In the statutes of 1625 (the year of his death) it is noticeable that the Usher was not necessarily to know Greek, nor the Head Master Hebrew, nor was he bound to be in orders. The Usher was to be 'a godly, learned, and discreet man, one that can make true Latin, both in prose and verse.' And 'he shall carry himself reverently towards the School Master.' The School Master was to 'be at the time of his election, and so continue, an honest and discreet man, Master of Arts, and diligent in his place, and painful in the educating of children in good learning and religion, such as can make a Greek and a Latin verse.' If he proved 'negligent in his place, and of lewd conversation,' he was to be thrice admonished, then deprived, and another chosen in his place. The Usher could only look for two admonishments. The Archdeacon chose a body of twenty-four Governors, eight of them *ex officio*, one of them the representative of his own family, to be called the Patron; and it is to be noticed that three-fourths of this Body were clerics. All the parsons of the immediate neighbourhood were chosen, with the remarkable exception of the Rector of Uppingham. Was this because the Rector was a pluralist and

an absentee,[1] or was it that the Founder, with extraordinary prescience, had divined that a Governor residing so near the School might possibly be a thorn in the flesh of the School Master at Uppingham? Probably the former, as he did not make an exception in the case of Oakham. Another thing to be noticed is, that at the time these statutes were drawn up 'John Clarke, my School Master of Uppingham, and Jeremy Whitaker, my School Master of Oakham' were among the Governors 'whom I do choose and will that they be confirmed Governors of the goods and resources of my Schools and Hospitals, and their successors for ever.'

[1] This was thirteen years before Jeremy Taylor's time. He was appointed Rector of Uppingham in 1638, at the age of twenty-five, and was ejected in 1642.

## APPENDIX II

### THE SCHOOL-HOUSE HALL LATIN GRACE

BEFORE. Benedic nobis,
AFTER. Agimus tibi gratias, } Domine omnipotens, { Cum / Pro } His et Universis donis tuis quæ de tua largitate { sumus jam sumpturi, / accepimus, } Qui Vivis et regnas et es Deus in sæcula sæculorum. Per Jesum Christum Dominum Nostrum.

# APPENDIX III

## REMARKABLE INSTANCE OF THRING'S POLITICAL FORESIGHT.

THAT Thring, besides being a leader of opinion in matters educational, had also in him the makings of a statesman, will, I think, be conceded when the following letter written by him twenty years ago is viewed in the light of later events, military and political, connected both with the wars in the Soudan and in South Africa, and with the still more recent questions of Colonial and Fiscal policy.

How great a change public opinion has undergone is at once apparent when we consider the strong anti-colonial sentiments expressed a hundred years ago by 'so sound-hearted a Liberal as Sydney Smith,' and again fifty years later by a man 'so generous and far-seeing as Sir Henry Taylor,' and twenty-five years later still by no less a person than Mr. Gladstone: and though Lord Beaconsfield in 1872 and

Mr. W. E. Forster in 1884 had done much to create and increase a public opinion in favour of Imperial consolidation, it must be admitted that Thring, writing in 1885, went beyond either of them, and spoke with a political foresight, and, I may almost say, a prescience which is certainly most remarkable.

The following is an extract from an article on Imperial Federation and Colonial Policy, written by Frederick Jackson in the *Times* in 1893: 'Of the sanguine hopes that were entertained by enthusiasts in 1885 we will give one more illustration. EDWARD THRING, the eminent Head Master of Uppingham, whose influence on English thought and feeling has been second only to that of Dr. Arnold, at once espoused the cause. Writing to Dr. Parkin, one of the most ardent and devoted members of the Executive Council of the League, he said:

'"The one bright spot is the Colonial feeling and the Federation question, which has really got hold of the nation in a good way, with good leaders. It must come; the only question is, who will reap the benefit? Exactly the same causes which turned the Heptarchy into Britain, viz., the increased communication, now magnified into electricity and steam, will make

the governments of the future federations—by a law of nature. Few pause to consider how Europe, even now, with all its bitter hostilities, is nevertheless to a vast extent a Federal Government, and conducting three-fourths of its business by federation. . . . Your programme is the right one. More than that, in one form or another, it must come to pass. We ought at once to put ourselves at the head of a great empire. We ought to fly our flag on every unoccupied land essential to our great colonies. . . . Egypt and the Soudan frontier to Khartoum, and connected by rail with Suakim as a matter of course. Free trade with all our colonies; differential duties with other nations. Each colony to undertake to provide according to its strength for its own defence, and if not threatened, a small contingent for the Imperial Army, and a common Parliament for such purposes, or Bills for such purposes to be passed in a majority of the Parliaments." '

GLASGOW: PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO. LTD.